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Nov. 1919

November 15, 1919.
Office of the State Ornithologist
136 State House
Boston, Massachusetts.

The autumn weather continues mild with frequent rains and south winds, but with north winds cold weather must be expected, as there is much snow now as far south as northern New England. Winter birds are coming into the southern New England states following the northern storms. Here it looks little like winter. Many lawns in eastern and central Massachusetts and many pastures and fields in southern Connecticut retain their green tints, while here and there dandelions and bluets are in bloom. Near the coast some late garden flowers are blossoming.

Many water birds are moving southward and others have reached their winter stations along the shore. There are many herring gulls on the coast, black-backed gulls are quite common locally, and a single white gull, probably an Iceland gull, has been reported. Kittiwakes are seen occasionally. A few swans have been noted here and there along the coast of southern New England, or migrating high in air, since October 30.

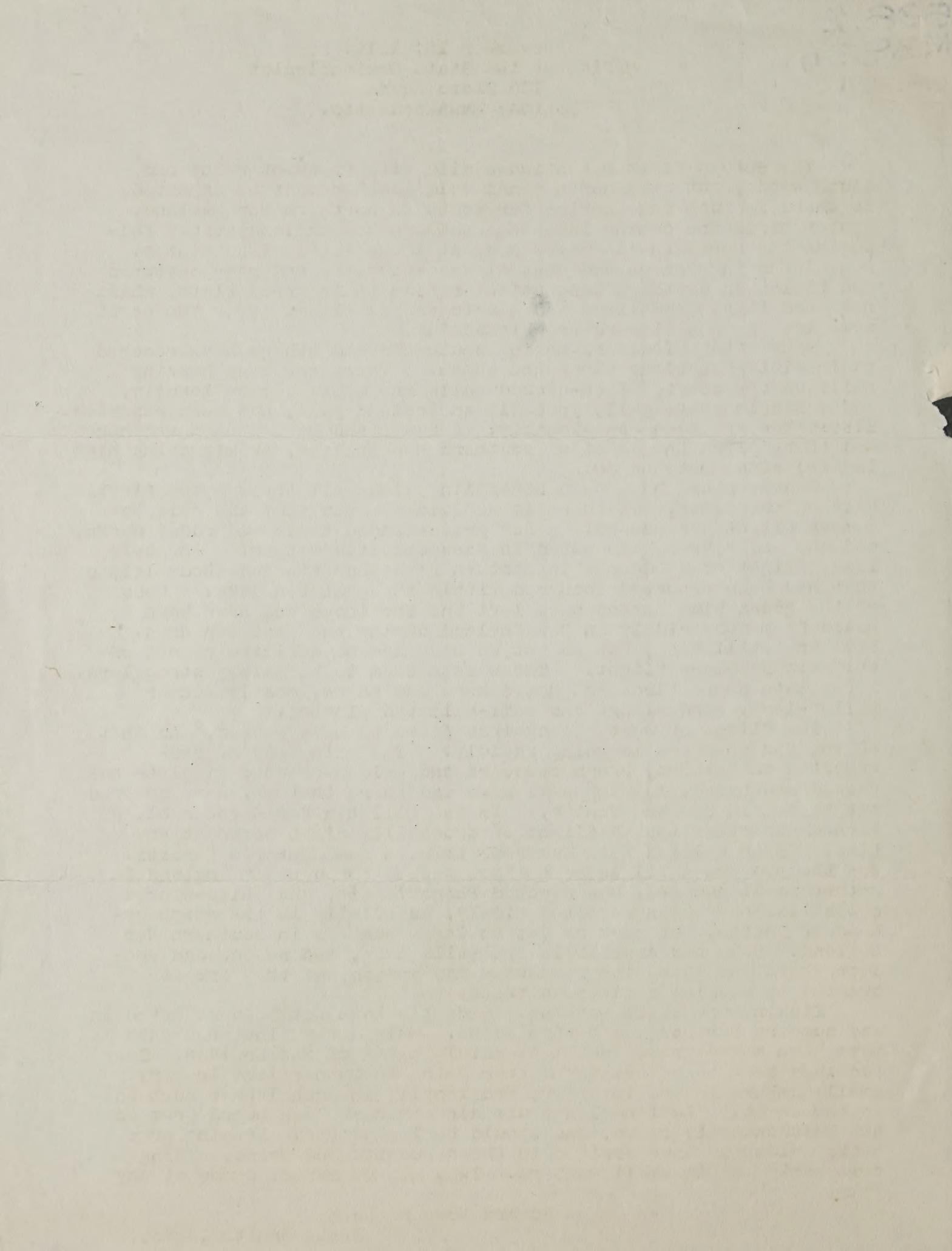
Canada geese have been straggling along all through the first half of the month, but there is no evidence yet that the main November flight has passed. A few green-winged teals and ruddy ducks, and one eider, have been noted in Massachusetts waters. The only large flight of woodcocks in eastern Massachusetts and Rhode Island that has been reported occurred within the past ten days. Most of the great blue herons have left the Provinces and have been heard from very widely in New England during the past ten days. Some are still here, but as yet we have had no definite report of the main November flight. Those seen seem to be mainly stragglers. A few late shore birds are noted here and there, mostly winter yellow-legs, sanderlings and semi-palmated plovers.

The flight of rusty blackbirds seems to have passed, and that of the fox sparrows is going rapidly. The main body of red-breasted nuthatches, brown creepers and golden-crowned kinglets has passed southward, leaving some here and there that may have dropped out to remain for the winter. In the bulletin for October 31, we warned observers that a flight of crossbills might occur at any time. Both species were numerous then in some Ontario forests. Now the red crossbill seems to have passed through New England in rather small numbers, has reached Pennsylvania, and white-winged crossbills have been reported widely, especially in the neighborhood of Boston, but nowhere yet in large numbers in southern New England. Some red crossbills are still here, and no one can predict where and when either species may appear, but they are attracted by seeding coniferous trees.

Siskins are still passing. Redpolls have not been reported in any numbers farther south than Maine. Only a few pine grosbeaks have been heard from, and these mainly north of New England. Snow buntings seem to be scattered from Maine to Connecticut in very small numbers in the interior, and locally in much larger numbers on the coast. Lapland longspurs already have been heard from on the Massachusetts coast, and should be looked for. Evening grosbeaks evidently have arrived in Massachusetts and Maine, having come early but in small numbers. They may be expected now at any time.

Edward Howe Forbush,
State Ornithologist.

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Dec. 1919

NOTES FOR OBSERVERS

December 15, 1919.
Office of The State Ornithologist
136 State House
Boston, Massachusetts.

Seesawing temperatures and lightning changes of the weather seem to be accepted philosophically by the birds. November 13 was warm and spring-like. Yesterday, November 14, came a change, with a stormy sky, freezing temperature and a piercing northwest wind, but several individuals of a flock of tree sparrows were enjoying a bath in the icy waters of a little brook. These hardy birds have been reported singing time after time, not only in November but in every month while they stay with us.

A sudden freeze will send the waterfowl scurrying to the sea, as was the case during the first week in the month, when many northern lakes in the interior were sealed with ice. Then golden-eyes, oldsquaws, wild geese and horned grebes passed south in numbers along the coast from eastern Maine to Long Island Sound. Greater snow geese (?) were noted in Connecticut. At the same time large numbers of brown creepers were reported from Vermont, and the number of tree sparrows increased as far south as Long Island, N.Y.

Several belated reports of swans have come from Maine, Massachusetts and Connecticut since the month came in. About the first of the month an Arkansas kingbird was taken on Cape Cod, and on the 8th a great-crested flycatcher was reported on the beach between Lynn and Nahant, Mass., feeding on insects or crustaceans among the seaweed thrown up on the beach. It would be interesting to know how long this bird remained there and where it came from.

Crossbills are no longer reported here in considerable numbers. Two of the large long-billed Newfoundland crossbills were taken on Cape Cod about the first of the month. Others, probably of the same race, were taken earlier in Rhode Island. This leads to the belief that the cone crop has failed in Newfoundland. White-winged crossbills are still here.

Evening grosbeaks and pine grosbeaks thus far have not been noted in southern New England in any numbers, though pine grosbeaks are abundant in northern Canadian forests. Perhaps at this late date no large migration of pine grosbeaks need be looked for, but there is some chance of a later flight of evening grosbeaks. Redpolls do not seem to be moving southward rapidly, although they appear to have left the forests of Ontario and are noted in some numbers in the Berkshire hills of Massachusetts. Siskins have decreased in numbers here. Horned larks have increased locally along the coast, but snow buntings are reported rarely. Cedar

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waxwings have mostly passed to the southward. Twenty-one Bohemian waxwings have been reported from Ontario, and a single bird (seen at close range) from Massachusetts. It does not seem likely that we shall have a flight of these rare birds in Massachusetts again this year, but many northern birds are reported from Michigan, and now is the time to look for them here. Birds generally appear to be scarce. Even downy woodpeckers, nuthatches, juncos and tree sparrows apparently are not quite as common as is usual at this time of the year.

A correspondent from Cape Cod notes that all birds seem to fear the mockingbird at this season, and that they disappear from the neighborhood that it inhabits. He suggests that they mistake it for a shrike. Wiser people have done so, as it is not so long ago that a mockingbird was shot near Boston, the shooter believing that he had killed a shrike until he had the bird in his hand. Has anyone else noticed that other birds fear the mocker in winter and shun its neighborhood?

Anyone seeing a waxwing now should make sure of the species, as Bohemian waxwings may appear. Therefore we reproduce the parallel sent out last winter, and respectfully call attention to the fact that the Bohemian waxwing so far as we know always has chestnut under tail coverts, while the cedar waxwing never has them.

Cedar Waxwing

Length about 8 inches
Male and Female

Wing:

Middle of edges of primaries and upper edges of secondaries show light, and in a bright light may appear whitish.

Throat:

Black, but shading gradually into the color of the neck.

Belly:

Yellowish.

Lower tail coverts:

Whitish.

Bohemian Waxwing

Larger- nearly 9 inches long.
Adult male

Wing:

Small patch near middle lower edge of wing pure white. Another small white patch above and behind this on ends of secondaries. Edges of ends of primaries show yellow and white extending to end of wing.

Female: like the male, but white takes place of yellow on primaries so that a line of white extends from the white patch on ends of secondaries to tip of wing.

Throat:

Black mark larger than in cedar waxwing, and having a more distinct, definite edge.

Belly:

Grayish.

Lower tail coverts:

Chestnut or cinnamon.

E. H. Harborth.

State Ornithologist.

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JAN. 1920

NOTES for OBSERVERS

January 15, 1920.
Director, Division of Ornithology.
136 State House
Boston, Mass.

The first fifteen days of January have provided typical winter weather. Early in the month a few Iceland gulls and one Kumlien's gull were noted on the coast of Essex County, Mass., and the glaucous gull has been reported on the Maine coast. The lakes of central New York are still open, as usual, and many diving ducks remain there. In some severe winters these lakes freeze up in February and drive the ducks and grebes to the coast.

Winter water fowl of most species are still here in normal numbers. They gather about springs "water holes" or unfrozen places or on flats kept clear of ice by the tides. Many Canada geese and a very few brant have been reported during the month in southeastern Massachusetts, and a few geese along the coast of Connecticut. Two great blue herons have been noted, one from Connecticut and one from Cape Cod.

Land birds generally appear to be unusually scarce in New England, especially in the northern regions. Locally along the southern seaboard several species seem to be common or abundant. The contrast in numbers of both species and individuals observed respectively on the coast and in the interior seems to be greater than usual at this season.

During the first half of January larger numbers of great horned owls have been reported than in December. As usual a few eagles have been noted, and from Worcester County, Mass., there have been several reports of a large vulture, which is said to be "larger than an eagle", but none of our observers has seen it. Possibly this may be a bald eagle, but those who have reported it say that its head and neck are naked.

Most of the cowbirds along the southern coast of New England disappeared late in December. A very few red-winged blackbirds have been reported since from that region, and also a few grackles. Starlings now do not appear to be decreasing, but since the extreme cold weather of December quite a number have been reported as dying from starvation or cold. One which was sent to the office frozen appeared to be well nourished.

The reports indicate that pine grosbeaks, evening grosbeaks and snow buntings increased in numbers generally in Massachusetts during the month. Pine grosbeaks have now been reported from Cape Cod, but are still few and far between. White-winged crossbills have been noted in Pennsylvania, which is evidence of their further migration, but a few still remain in Massachusetts, and one flock of fifty was reported on January 4 from Norfolk County, Mass. Most of the reports of red crossbills so far this month come from

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January 15, 1920. -2-

Cape Cod, but a few range from Maine to Rhode Island. White-throated sparrows in rather small numbers have been noted along the coast from Essex County, Mass., locally to southwestern Connecticut, and along the southern seaboard of New England a very few fox sparrows have been noted.

Only two flocks of cedar waxwings have been reported from New England so far this month. A single flock of Bohemian waxwings has been noted in the Province of Quebec, but none has been reported from New England. Reports of mockingbirds along the seaboard increase, and a few towhees are wintering in that region. The migration of horned larks has reached Washington, D.C.

The best opportunities for observing birds during this month may be had on the coast of Massachusetts near Cape Ann, on the southern shores of Cape Cod, the western shores of Buzzards Bay, the coast south of New Bedford, the Elizabeth Islands, Nantucket, Tuckernuck, Muskeget and Marthas Vineyard. In favorable spots along these shores there are not only many individuals of several species of water birds, but also many land birds.

E. H. Harborth.
Director, Division of Ornithology.

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NOTES FOR OBSERVERS

RECOMMENDED

Office of the Director, Division of Ornithology
136 State House, Boston
Massachusetts.

February 29, 1920.

Some species have been omitted from the foregoing list. We do not know definitely whether a considerable number of Cormorants reported from Essex County, Mass., were Double-crested Cormorants or Common Cormorants, - and some of the Loons reported probably were Red-throated Loons. Two Wilson's Snipe were reported from Block Island staying near an open spring. A Canada Jay (?) was reported from Essex Co., Mass.

We note that Meadowlarks were omitted. Our maps of distribution show that they appear to be increasing somewhat and working slowly northward in Massachusetts and towards the interior. Their numbers appear to have diminished on eastern Long Island and on Block Island.

A caged Rose-breasted Grosbeak in Rhode Island, which was sometimes liberated and allowed to wander about on pleasant days, has undoubtedly been the cause of some reports of this species in winter.

Vast numbers of winter Wild Fowl have congregated during the month off the coast near South Dartmouth, Mass. Some rare species may be with them.

Bohemian Waxwings and Longspurs should be looked for now, the latter not only on the coast, but in the interior. They may be seen by themselves or with Snow Buntings.

It is time for the earlier spring movements of Robins, Bluebirds, Song Sparrows, Red-winged Blackbirds and a few other species, and some may come at any time with southwest winds and melting snow. But as yet we have no reports of such a movement from the states southwest of New England.

The Snow Goose reported shot in Essex County in Bulletin XXIII appeared on examination to be a young Greater Snow Goose.

Questions

Why is it that some Starlings have yellow bills in winter and others have dark bills, and is there any time in the year when they all have dark bills?

On what are the Redpolls now feeding? Several observers have reported them as feeding on the seeds of the evening primrose; others as eating the buds of apple trees.

To what extent have Starlings, Pheasants and English Sparrows devoured the food of native birds, and have they been observed to drive native birds away from food stations?

EDWARD HOWE FORBUSH,

Director, Division of Ornithology.



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NOTES FOR OBSERVERS
Office of the Director, Division of Ornithology
136 State House, Boston, Massachusetts
August 16, 1920.

As the summer wanes the migration of the smaller shore birds reaches its height, and most of the land birds are moving about. We have reports of movements toward all the cardinal points of the compass, but from now on a predominating southward trend may be looked for. In late July and early August there was an eastward movement during which Western Sandpipers, Black Terns and Sooty Terns appeared on the New England coast. July 29 a Northern Water Thrush appeared on Block Island. There was a considerable movement of summer residents the first week in August. Birds were heard moving at night, and by the 8th some Black-poll Warblers had reached Connecticut, while numerous Kingbirds and immature Chestnut-sided Warblers were seen for a few days in localities where they rarely breed. Bobolinks were moving in large numbers. In late July and early August the cries of Screech Owls were noticeable in many places. During the second week in August many land birds have been reported as leaving their breeding places in the Provinces and disappearing. Probably this is the beginning of their autumnal migration there. In Maine some Warblers are reported as moving southward.

The past breeding season has been a good one for the Terns. Common Terns have now increased so much in numbers on the Massachusetts coast that small colonies and scattered pairs may be found nesting in almost any suitable location. Herring Gulls nested in at least three different places in Massachusetts, but did not raise many young, as some of the nests were swept by high tides and one of their nesting places was practically washed away. Arctic and Roseate Terns are increasing fast and have bred well this year. Least Terns also are establishing new breeding places. There is no report of the nesting of Laughing Gulls in Massachusetts this year, except on Muskeget Island. There has been some increase in the number of Upland Plovers in New England. Under protection breeding Killdeers are coming back in Connecticut and Massachusetts. Locally on the Massachusetts coasts large numbers of shore birds have been observed, including most of the species that visit this region.

Our investigations in western Massachusetts during the summer have yielded some information regarding the distribution of certain uncommon residents that may be useful to observers generally. The statements given herewith are based on the recent field work of Mr. John A. Farley and that of official observers, rather than on published information.

Notes for Observers
August 16, 1920 -2-

The Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was met in the breeding season in Franklin and Berkshire Counties only at altitudes of 1600 to 2200 feet.

The Winter Wren was noted in the breeding season not only in Berkshire County, where it may be seen on Greylock and at other more or less high altitudes, but in Franklin, Hampshire and Hampden Counties at altitudes ranging down to 600 feet. As a rule it was found near a brook in the woods, often in a ravine, but it is not by any means confined to spruce or even to coniferous woods, but is seen in mixed woods.

The Olive-sided Flycatcher may breed anywhere between the western border of Massachusetts and the elbow of Cape Cod. It has been reported as far east as Dennis, Mass., and is well known in Berkshire County. It breeds from near sea level to an altitude of 1600 feet and higher, but it seems now to be rarer in New England than it was forty years ago. In Rowe, Franklin County, Mass., where Mr. Farley found six or seven pairs and two nests in June, 1918, he could not find a single individual in 1920. This bird may be found in swamps or on mountain sides. It seems fond of a nesting location where there are tall dead trees to serve as lofty watch towers for its hunting.

The Blackburnian Warbler is a forest bird. It is very common on Greylock, where it may be found in the tall dense spruces and in the adjoining mixed growth as well. But it is also found among hemlocks and white pines in clear stands or mixed with hardwoods at low altitudes, and breeds from Berkshire to the sea. It is an equally common bird in New Hampshire, occurring anywhere in the white pines of the southern and central parts of that state. In the breeding season it seems gradually to disappear as we approach southeastern Massachusetts, but breeds sparingly elsewhere in the eastern sections, principally in white pines or hemlocks.

The Magnolia Warbler is a bird of the spruce regions, and is most common in rather open country, such as pastures where young spruces, more or less scattered, are growing. It is likely to nest where such spruces are found from Berkshire County east to northern Worcester County, but has not been noted elsewhere, or at altitudes much below 1200 feet.

The Myrtle Warbler is much less common than the Blackburnian or the Magnolia, but it has quite a wide breeding range over central and western Massachusetts, and as it has now been found nesting in one locality in southern Worcester County near the Connecticut line, and carrying food apparently to nestlings in another town a few miles away, but also near the Connecticut line and not greatly above sea level, it may yet be found nesting in eastern Massachusetts, or even in Connecticut. This species is fond of spruce, but Mr. Farley has found two nests in white pines, one high up, the other less than six feet from the ground. This species may be confidently looked for anywhere in Massachusetts

where spruces or white pines grow at altitudes of 1200 feet or more. Like the Magnolia it frequents pasture spruces, but unlike that bird it also inhabits white pine groves. Therefore it may be found casually in the breeding season almost anywhere in central or western Massachusetts, and should be looked for as a possibility in the northeastern counties and also in the highlands of northwestern Connecticut.

The Black-throated Blue Warbler breeds both in coniferous and deciduous woods over most of western Massachusetts. It is fond of spruce and hemlock, but is not dependent on either.

The Mourning Warbler is a bird of sproutland where timber has been cut off. It is common in sproutland near the very summit of Greylock, but is not confined to the top of the mountain, and has been met with in other parts of the range, and also well to the eastward in Franklin County, but apparently does not range very far east in Massachusetts. It was found in its favorite sproutland down to 1000 feet.

The Canada Warbler is widely distributed over most of the state, but is more common in western Massachusetts than in the eastern counties, where it is very local. It seems to care little about altitude or any particular kind of vegetation, but in most parts prefers cool, moist places, such as cedar swamps, for its breeding grounds.

The Louisiana Water Thrush breeds here and there along the banks of small streams and up their tributary brooks west of the Connecticut River and north to the Vermont line. We know very little of its occurrence in the breeding season east of the river. But the Northern Water Thrush breeds scatteringly eastward in the northern half of the state to Middlesex County.

The Blue-headed Vireo breeds everywhere in the state, except perhaps in Barnstable, Dukes and Nantucket Counties. It is a white pine and hemlock bird. Hence it breeds sparingly where there are few of these trees. Contrariwise, it is a common wood bird in Plymouth County, and adjacent similar country in other counties, where there is more white pine today than in any other part of the state. Therefore it breeds plentifully at sea level in southeastern Massachusetts.

The Slate-colored Junco is abundant on Greylock, and was noted more or less commonly elsewhere where there was spruce. In fact it may be found more or less sparingly in and out of the spruce in most parts of western Massachusetts. It is widely but sparingly distributed elsewhere in the state east to Middlesex County. There seem to be no records of its breeding in Plymouth, Barnstable, Dukes or Nantucket Counties, or in southern Worcester County. It

is most common at altitudes of 1200 feet or more. The White-throated Sparrow is more common than the Junco in the spruce regions of western Massachusetts, and where the spruce has been cut off it remains to breed in the "slash" where it seems to increase in numbers. It is not confined to the spruce regions. In northern Massachusetts the White-throat is now noted locally clear down to the sea, where the Junco has not yet been observed in the breeding season. We have not heard of this sparrow in summer in the southeastern region of Massachusetts.

Golden-crowned Kinglets breed in the spruces on Mount Greylock, and in other stands of this tree in Berkshire County, also intermittently or sporadically elsewhere in central Massachusetts. They formerly bred in northern Worcester County in swamp spruces at an altitude of about 1200 feet, but no one has reported them there recently. Mr. Farley and other observers saw them and their young this year only in Berkshire County.

The Olive-backed Thrush: This is a bird of the spruce and the fir. On Greylock it was noted down to 2500 feet. Elsewhere down to about 1600 feet, and not much lower. It's breeding has now been reported from Berkshire County, Mass., east to northwestern Worcester County. It nests in swamps where spruce and white pine grow, and along streams shaded with spruce and hemlock.

Bicknell's Thrush was not recognized this season even on Greylock.

Formerly the Hermit Thrush was regarded, rightly or wrongly, as absent or as a very rare breeder in most of the state, though always more or less common on the western highlands. Now, however, it occupies most of our territory as a summer resident, though still rare or wanting locally in southern Worcester County, seldom seen in the breeding season near Boston, and not reported from Nantucket. It is specially common in southeastern Massachusetts, as in Plymouth and Bristol Counties, and on the upper half of Cape Cod (Barnstable County in part), where it is the "wood thrush" of this entire section, being often known as WOOD THRUSH by many of the inhabitants. It prefers woods containing some coniferous trees and seems to have been increasing in recent years.

QUESTIONS

When do young Orioles leave their nesting places and pass on to the south? We have conflicting reports about this. What is the condition of the broods of Ruffed Grouse at this time? Are they large or small? Has the Ruffed Grouse increased much during the season in southern New England?

Edward Howe Forbush,

Director, Division of Ornithology.
Massachusetts Department of Agriculture.

NOTES FOR OBSERVERS
Office of the Director, Division of Ornithology
136 State House, Boston, Massachusetts
November 15, 1920.

We can give little information regarding the movements of migrants from the north. The reports have not come in. They may come later, but delayed reports while valuable for our maps and records are of no use in making up these notes. We have no definite reports of Brant, Rusty Blackbirds, Catbirds, Cormorants, Cross-bills, Doves, Eagles, Grosbeaks, Kingfishers, Longspurs, Mockingbirds, Sapsuckers, Siskins, Waxwings or Winter Wrens. We have only one to three reports each of Red-winged Blackbirds, Snow Buntings, Cowbirds, Scoters, Red-breasted Mergansers, Goldfinches, Purple Finches, Flickers, Flycatchers, Gannets, Geese, Grackles, Grebes, Grouse, Hawks of various species, Herons, Horned Larks, Loons, Nuthatches, Ospreys, Owls, Pipits, Plovers, Redpolls, Sandpipers, Shrikes, Snipe, Thrushes, Warblers, Woodcocks and Woodpeckers. The only species of Sparrow on which we have more than three reports is the Tree Sparrow.

When it is considered that our observers are located from Canada to Florida, it becomes apparent at once that any information based on the few reports that we now have would be of no value. Why this sudden falling off in the number of reports since October? We had hoped to carry our bulletins through the coming winter, but unless our kind but delinquent friends report, we shall not attempt to go further with them. If birds are present in your region we desire to know it. If they are scarce or lacking we desire to know that. We shall wait for today's mail and if anything worth while is received will include it in these notes. Friends, if you do not care for the bulletin do not send reports, but if you wish to receive it, please mail us twice each month a report of all the birds that you see, so that the letters will reach us before the 15th and 30th.

Later: We have received reports of a few Longspurs and Snow Buntings on the coast. Ipswich Sparrows and Fox Sparrows have been coming along. Adult Gannets now appear. After some years of scarcity Brown Creepers and Golden-crowned Kinglets seem to have increased to normal numbers. Pine Grosbeaks, Siskins and both species of Nuthatch are numerous in the wilderness of northern Ontario, and a small flight of Owls has been noticed there, also some Goshawks. Snow Buntings were very abundant there and moving south November 10. There was a large flight of Bluebirds in southern New England the first week of November. There seemed to be a considerable flight of land and water birds through New England from the 10th to the 12th, including Fox Sparrows, Tree Sparrows, Geese, Brant and Ducks, - but no large flight of Geese has been reported from Cape Cod. Loons and Grebes have been flying along the coast, including many Red-throated Loons. Two Phoebe have been reported, one in Massachusetts and one on Long Island. Most of the autumnal migrant land birds have gone south, and apparently few winter birds have appeared from the north. They may not come this winter in numbers, but they should be looked for now. --- A flight of Great Blue Herons was reported on Block Island in the early morning of October 30, otherwise no one has yet reported a late flight of these birds. It may have passed in the night, or it may come yet. It should be looked for now along the coast, as there is snow and ice in the northern interior

Edward Howe Forbush,

Director, Division of Ornithology.

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NOTES FOR OBSERVERS
Office of the Director, Division of Ornithology
136 State House, Boston, Mass.

January 15, 1921.

The mild weather of the first fifteen days of January, with its occasional low temperatures, has confused the record. We hear of wild Geese flying north, earthworms coming out on lawns, snakes crawling out into the sunshine, and woodchuck coming out to take an observation. Geese will not get very far. There are many in the Sounds south of New England, driven out of inland waters by freezing weather in late December and early January. Some of these birds occasionally explore to the northward, visiting waters where the ice has broken up. There was a real southward movement of Geese during the first week of the month. Many flocks shut out by the ice in the interior were moving seaward.

Dovekies, Murres, Razor-billed Auks, Guillemots, Crebes and Loons are found more or less off our coasts. A King Eider has been taken near Nantucket. One Kumlien's Gull and an Iceland Gull have been reported, and a few Bonaparte's and Kittiwakes. Sanderlings are noted from Cape Cod to Long Island.

The flights of land birds coincide with those of Geese. Early in January there was some movement of land birds to the southward, with some increase of such birds at that time from Massachusetts to New Jersey. On the whole, however, land birds generally are about as scarce as in December.

On January 1, a large flock of Pine Grosbeaks was seen in western Massachusetts, which moved on into Connecticut. Shrikes increased about this time. A few more Pine Grosbeaks, some Siskins and some slight increase in Goldfinches have been noted in southern New England. Fewer Mockingbirds and Catbirds are reported than were noted last winter.

Chickadees have disappeared locally in northern Vermont, and have appeared in large numbers locally in Connecticut. In one case about "a thousand" were reported on one wooded hillside. There may have been some southward movement of Chickadees, but there is more evidence of a movement toward the coast, as Chickadees are reported more in the coast counties of Massachusetts than they were in December. Brown-capped Chickadees have not been reported from the Provinces or New England.

There are reports of Robins, Bluebirds, Fox Sparrows, White-throated and Swamp Sparrows. A flock of Tree Swallows has remained on Long Island, N.Y., since December 30. The Ruby-crowned Kinglet was reported there on the 9th. Crossbills, Pine Siskins, Goldfinches and Purple Finches are numerous locally in the Provinces, but apparently not so abundant in Maine, and scarce in southern New England. Birds are plentiful in Canadian forests and in Newfoundland.

We have some difficulty in identifying birds from some descriptions sent in. One correspondent writes about "a large bird flying in a straight line toward a high hill, and uttering at short intervals notes something like a Cuckoo. It did not sail or soar. Was it an Owl?" It may have been an Owl, but the evidence seems hardly conclusive.

Edward Howe Forbush,

Director, Division of Ornithology

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NOTES FOR OBSERVERS

Office of the Director, Division of Ornithology
136 State House, Boston, Mass.

February 15, 1921

The spring migration has begun. All the way up from South Carolina to New Jersey there are indications of a northward movement within the past few days. In New Jersey more Kingfishers, Rusty Blackbirds, Red-wings, Fox Sparrows, White-throated Sparrows, Flickers and Robins are noted. Cardinals which have been wintering on the coast have left for the interior. Quite a number of small insects have been observed. The birds are now more numerous in New Jersey than is usual at this time of the year.

The snow of the last of January and the cold of February 1 caused some slight movements and gatherings of birds. The great storm on the banks of Newfoundland and in some of the Maritime Provinces, which began on the 6th, drove many hardy seabirds down on the coast of Massachusetts. Auks, Guillemots, Murres, Puffins, Kittiwakes, and some great dark seabirds not identified, possibly Skuas, have been reported. Winter Yellow-legs, Black-breasted Plovers and Red-backed Sandpipers are seen on the Virginia coast. Great quantities of Ducks and Geese lie off the Massachusetts shores, and visit some inland waters that are now open. Geese are found along all the New England coast and to Nova Scotia. Black-backed Gulls are unusually numerous.

About the 6th many Crossbills, Siskins, Purple Finches and Redpolls were moving, possibly southward. More Crossbills of both species were reported in Vermont than have been seen this winter, and a few were noted in Massachusetts. Snow Buntings and Prairie Horned Larks seemed to be moving northward early in the month, while Meadowlarks and Cedar Waxwings appeared to be moving all along the coast from South Carolina to Massachusetts. Myrtle Warblers were reported rare in South Carolina, but very abundant in Virginia. Chickadees seemed a little more common in some places, very abundant in others, but locally rare. Evidently many are moving, as they have come back now to localities and sections from which they have been absent for a long time.

Early in the month there was a movement of Acadian Owls in eastern Maine, and more Bluebirds were noted in Massachusetts. A male Bluebird was stunned against a window near Bangor, Maine, on the 8th. Catbirds have wintered nearly to the northern boundary of Massachusetts, and Hermit Thrushes on Cape Cod. A careful search of thickets overgrown with smilax vines might reveal many more of these two species than those of which we now have records. Mockingbirds are noted as usual near the Massachusetts coast.

The snowstorm of the 11th drove more birds to the feeding stations, but still the scarcity of winter birds continued. Southern New England has almost no Pine Grosbeaks, Redpolls,

Siskins or Crossbills, and generally few Purple Finches or Goldfinches. Jays have increased somewhat and seem to be coming back a little. The early northward movement of Cedar Waxwings along the coastal plain of Massachusetts is quite pronounced. A few Grackles, Rusty Blackbirds, Cowbirds and Redwings, also a few Fox, Field and Swamp Sparrows are here. Robins are scattered here and there, but are more numerous in eastern Maine than in Massachusetts. We have one report of a Wilson's Warbler (?) on Cape Cod. The Carolina Wren is noted on Long Island, and the Winter Wren in Massachusetts.

There has been much more winter bird song than usual. Shrikes, Tree Sparrows and Song Sparrows have been singing more or less in all the winter months, and lately a few Robins and Meadowlarks have been giving their spring songs. Other bird songs are reported.

We have in this office a limited number of copies of the illustrated 600-page Monograph on the Gypsy Moth, by Forbush and Fernald. There is a chapter on birds known to feed on the gypsy moth. It gives a history of the moth in Europe, its introduction into this country, its life history, and a narrative of the work of the state in controlling it, before the work was allowed to lapse for five years, with the resultant spread of the moth over Massachusetts and into other states. The work contains colored plates of the gypsy moth and other insects and many cuts. If any of our observers desire it, we will send copies as long as they last, on receipt of postage. For the first two zones the postage is 7 cents; the third, ten cents; fourth, fifteen cents, and the fifth twenty cents.

Edward Howe Forbush,

Director, Division of Ornithology.

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NOTES FOR OBSERVERS

Office of the Director, Division of Ornithology
136 State House, Boston, Mass.

March 15, 1921.

The early spring migration is now under way from the Carolinas to the southern maritime Provinces of Canada. The great vernal movement of water-fowl is working slowly up the coast and into the interior. Many Grebes are already passing northward, and Loons and Holboell's Grebes have been giving their spring notes since early in the month. Great numbers of Razor-billed Auks are reported well off shore on the fishing grounds near Block Island. Immense numbers of Geese, Brant and Ducks are seen along the southeastern coasts of southern New England, and some Geese are continually moving into the interior. Gannets are off our coasts.

The early migration of Hawks has passed, - but more will come. Jays and Chickadees are coming back to many localities from which they have been absent all winter. The first week in March the first wave of the great northward moving flood of small land birds began to come up through the middle and northern states. In this movement Flickers, Jays, Crows, Meadowlarks, Goldfinches, Purple Finches, Woodcock, Killdeers, Cedar Waxwings, Nuthatches, both White-breasted and Red-breasted, Red-wings, Rusty Blackbirds, Grackles, Cowbirds, Song Sparrows, White-throated Sparrows and Juncos participated, while Snow Buntings, Lapland Long-spurs, Horned Larks and Tree Sparrows were leaving New England for their breeding grounds.

Birds that had begun to move up from Virginia and West Virginia to New Jersey appeared during the second week of the month in southern New England, and now many of them have reached Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine and some of the Canadian Provinces. Among the Sparrows taking a small part in this migration were Swamp, Field, Savannah, Vesper and Chipping Sparrows. Song Sparrows were in the great majority, and within the past week they have overflowed the land. Only a few Chipping Sparrows have been reported in southern New England, and none farther north as yet.

A few Pine Warblers and Yellow Palm Warblers have been reported in southeastern Massachusetts. These may be wintering birds, but these species should be looked for now in favorable weather, as they may come early. A few Ruby-crowned Kinglets have been reported in southern New England, but they have been noted either here or on Long Island every month during the winter. The Carolina Wren is the only Wren reported. It was seen in southeastern Massachusetts. The few Catbirds, Mockingbirds and Hermit Thrushes now noted probably have wintered here. Some Crows, Jays, Starlings

and several species of Ducks are mating, or mated. Starlings and English Sparrows are building nests, and on Block Island a male Prairie Horned Lark has been seen industriously seeking and carrying food to his nest, but whether he is feeding the female or young has not yet been determined. Phoebe's are on their breeding grounds in West Virginia and the Middle States, and are coming into New England in small numbers.

Bluebirds have appeared irregularly, - in some localities in considerable numbers and in others they have been scarce. Some of the Bluebirds appear to be mated on their arrival. This seems very unusual. The February migration of Bluebirds which reached Maine and New Hampshire in small numbers before the storm of February 20 seems to have disappeared after the storm. The deep snow and the cold days following it may have been fatal to these birds. In such circumstances they crowd into shelter either in buildings, hollow trees, or nesting boxes, and remain there until the weather grows warmer. They may be able to withstand cold and starvation for a few days, but if the cold continues they succumb. After the storm Bluebirds were rarely heard from until the first week in March, but now the movement is going forward rapidly. Robins are generally distributed, but not everywhere in large numbers. There have been two records of Bohemian Waxwings and only two reports of Evening Grosbeaks this month in southern New England.

A small migration of Fox Sparrows came in late February and early March, but the greater movement is now on. Immense flights of birds seem to have passed over wide spaces. The 6th was a great day in New Jersey, but migrants arrived on that same date in some of the states of northern New England in small numbers, while many places in southern New England did not report any number of birds until later. The 9th and the 13th were also great days in some places. On the whole the early spring migration of birds is at least three weeks ahead of that of last year. "Herrings" are running up the tidal rivers. Wood frogs and hylas are peeping. Many insects are out, and a New York correspondent writes "We have had our first thunder storm, and we will now get ready for that good old sign of spring "sulphur and molasses!".

If we should have a severe snowstorm now, followed by cold weather, it might be very destructive to some of the birds that have already come north, and we suggest in such a case that observers make public as far as possible the food materials given in our Department Circular No.2 on methods of feeding desirable and beautiful birds, pages 19 to 33. Any observer who has not this circular will be supplied, on application, with the revised edition entitled: Department Bulletin No.2, Food, Feeding and Drinking Appliances and Nesting Material to Attract Birds.

Edward Howe Forbush,

Director, Division of Ornithology.

NOTES FOR OBSERVERS

Office of the Director, Division of Ornithology
136 State House, Boston, Mass.

May 16, 1931.

Now is the time! All the May birds are here. About one hundred and ten species have been reported in the last few days, - some in large numbers, others few and rare.

First in New York City on the night of the 13th came the report that many birds struck the Metropolitan Tower. In the morning birds were found dead in the street and many more alive in the park. On the 14th several new arrivals appeared in Massachusetts, and on the 15th the flood came and some passed over into Northern New Hampshire and Maine. The flight may be expected to continue in favorable weather during the next ten days. All the warblers that ordinarily pass through this region have been reported.

Questions

Many questions have been asked regarding what we now want as notes from observers. We desire exactly the same kind of notes that we have had in the past, but hope that observers will carry their observations a little farther. John Burroughs says that it is a good plan to hold your eye to the bird and see what he does. After all, the most important observations we can make are those by which we learn what birds do in the world. We shall endeavor from time to time to indicate in the items what we wish to know about birds. For example, now we should like some corroborative evidence in regard to the following:

1. If anyone has noted Grebes of any species or Loons using their wings in flight under water, we should like to hear of it and especially how the wings were used (how widely spread) and whether the feet also were used at the same time, - that is, whether the bird depended mostly on its wings or on its feet.

2. What unusual notes have you heard from Crows? We have heard some similar to those of Owls and Cuckoos and other indescribable notes, one of which, often repeated, exactly imitated the whine of a young puppy. We have records of two instances where Crows in captivity have been taught to talk. Are there others? One correspondent writes that in December three Crows amused several persons by their comical actions, bending down their heads so that their neck feathers might be dressed by each other, presenting one another with little twigs and touching their bills as if in salutation. Has anyone else observed anything like this?

3. Catbirds have a nest-robbing reputation among the country people. Has anyone observed this?

4. Who has heard from the Meadowlark a loud clear song resembling somewhat that of the Bobolink, but much louder?

5. We wish descriptions of the flight song of birds.

6. Who can describe the singular mating flight of the Ruby-throated Hummingbird?

The above are suggestions which we hope will bring new or corroborative information.

What imitations of the notes of other birds have you heard from the Catbird and the Brown Thrasher?

This is an extra sent out to notify you of the May flight. We do not intend to get out an extra monthly.

Edward Howe Forbush,
Director, Division of Ornithology.

Notes for Observers

Office of the Director, Division of Ornithology
136 State House, Boston,
Massachusetts

July 15, 1921.

The season thus far has been remarkable for a very considerable increase of Killdeers in southern New England, and the almost entire disappearance of Least Terns. There seems to have been some local increase of Upland Plovers in various parts of New England this year. This is unusual and we hope it may continue.

The autumnal migration has begun. Cowbirds and Starlings began to gather locally in small flocks late last month, and soon afterward young Grackles were seen flocking. Some land birds are now beginning to wander from their breeding places.

During the first week in July Dowitchers, Semi-palmated Sandpipers, Hudsonian Curlews and Black-breasted Plovers appeared in small numbers at isolated spots on the Massachusetts coast, and this week many more Least and Semi-palmated Sandpipers have appeared; also some Turnstones, Yellow-legs, Semi-palmated Plovers and Pectoral Sandpipers. Late in June there was a great school of whales off Cape Cod, and along with them large numbers of shearwaters. A few Loons and some small flocks of mixed scoters have been seen, also a few Lesser Scaups have been reported. During the storm in early July many shearwaters and later many Wilson's Petrels came into some of the harbors of Cape Cod and Nantucket, where a few jaegers also were seen.

Directly after the hot days of early July Egrets were reported from Connecticut, and on the 11th a Little Blue Heron in full plumage was noted at Marthas Vineyard. At some of the tern colonies great numbers of young terns perished about the time of the storm which began during the last days of June, and some of the eggs were washed off the beaches. Herring Gulls appear to have bred in at least two colonies in Massachusetts in small numbers, but suffered some from high storm tides.

The breeding of the Red-headed Woodpecker has been reported from Massachusetts and Connecticut, and a brood of young Barn Owls from the latter state. A pair of Blue Grosbeaks are believed to be breeding in Maine.

QUESTIONS

We continue to receive reports of the use of wings under water by Grebes and Loons. An old ornithologist tells us that he has never seen a tern or a gull dive and go completely under water. We have observed terns diving in this way, and also the Herring Gull. We would like any information regarding the habits or breeding places of gulls or terns, also information about the habits of diving birds. In preparing the work on Massachusetts Birds, we are now working on these species, and we shall be glad to give full credit for such notes as we can use.

Edward Howe Forbush,
Director, Division of Ornithology.

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PARKER NOTES FOR OBSERVERS
Office of the Director, Division of Ornithology
136 State House, Boston,
Massachusetts.

September 15, 1921

The first thirteen days of September were rather warmer than usual. There has been little rain, and forest fires have prevailed in certain localities. Enormous fires have been burning in the great areas between Quebec and James Bay, where great areas of woodland are said to be burned over, and other great tracts have been burned in northern Maine. These fires have driven the game and birds southward. Reports continue of a scarcity of cones in many regions, although in some places there are more cones, but very little wild fruit. Almost everywhere in the north there is an abundance of squirrels. Everything seems to indicate a southward migration of winter birds.

Early migrations continue. Nearly all local individuals among the summer residents have gone from southern New England except a few late breeders, such as robins, cedar waxwings and goldfinches. Young cedar waxwings left their nests in our yard on September 12. On September 7 and 9 large night-flights of birds were heard passing down the Connecticut Valley in Massachusetts.

Pied-billed grebes appeared early on Long Island. About August 20 loons which had not raised young left the lakes in northern Ontario. On the 23rd there were numbers of loons in the lakes of New Hampshire. Least and roseate terns appeared early on Long Island, and on August 30 Caspian terns were seen there in migration. On the 5th cormorants (?) were reported on the Massachusetts coast. Gannets were reported off the Maine coast in August, and on August 4 two were noted on Long Island. September 4 ten gannets were recorded in Essex County, Massachusetts. September 5 one hundred and fifty geese in flocks passed the coast of Essex County, Massachusetts, and on the 11th five hundred geese (?) in one great flock passed over Long Island. We question these last as it is possible they might have been cormorants. Long-billed dowitchers have been reported on the Massachusetts coast and one golden plover September 4. Rails have been common so far this month, and more yellow rails have been reported than is usual in southern New England and on Long Island. Reports of white herons continue to come in. They are about equally divided between little blue herons in the white plumage and egrets.

The migration of hawks has begun. On September 9 a goshawk was seen on Nantucket. On the 11th migrations of other hawks and ospreys were reported. Single barn owls have been noted in Rhode Island, Connecticut and on Long Island. Bitterns are reported to have left northern Ontario about the last of August. Pine grosbeaks came into northern Maine in large flocks from the north on August 1 to 5. Flocks of pine grosbeaks have been reported along the Maine coast. Olive sided flycatchers have been passing into southern New Jersey. Large numbers of nighthawks left a locality in New Brunswick September 11. This was the last flight. Only a few have been seen since. The first flock of migrating warblers noted at one station on Long Island was on August 13 and on August 9 a myrtle warbler appeared. Several worm-eating warblers have been reported on Long Island, and palm warblers on September 3. A Dicknell's thrush was noted there also on September 18, the earliest arrival on record for this sub-species there. A brown creeper was noted in Middlesex County, Massachusetts, September 12, which appeared to be singing.

Edward Howe Forbush
Director, Division of Ornithology

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NOTES FOR OBSERVERS
Office of the Director, Division of Ornithology
165 State House, Boston,
Massachusetts.

October 15, 1921.

The first half of October has been mild, so mild that some vegetation has begun to start up as in spring. On the 6th in northern Vermont slunk cabbage had grown 6 inches high, sheep laurel was in blossom for the second time, some raspberries had fruited again and in Boston a horse chestnut tree, which had shed the leaves from its lower branches very early, had put out new leaves and blossoms on these branches. Notwithstanding the mildness of the season the birds have gone south rapidly. Most of the northern Warblers are now in our southern Atlantic coast states or further south. Many of the Thrushes have passed southward. Just at present the migration of the Winter Wren is at full tide but it is rarely reported. As Frank Bolles says, it takes the underground railway and is seen when it pokes its head out of some brush pile or from some hole about the roots of a tree. Now the White-throated and White-crowned Sparrows are passing in numbers; also Myrtle and Yellow Palm Warblers and a few Fox Sparrows. Along the coast Holboell's and Horned Grebes appear and Loons have increased somewhat in numbers. Gannets are abundant locally. Geese and Brant are flying in small numbers. One small flock of Brant has been reported from the Connecticut valley in Vermont. No great flight of Hawks or Herons has been noted but the number of White Herons reported in New England has now nearly reached 100. Possibly half of these records are duplicates and since the first of October they come largely from the middle and southern Atlantic states. Never in our experience have there been so many reports of albino birds. Reports from the north still come in regarding a scarcity of nuts, birch catkins, cones and wild fruit but notwithstanding the early migration of Canadian birds few boreal species have been noted. A flock of Redpolls was reported, remaining in one locality in Maine from the last week in August until the 16th of September. This is the only considerable flock of boreal birds noted so far. There has been an unusually large flight of sapsuckers. It has not yet passed but is fast passing. There are many reports of Sapsuckers at work. One observer sees the Sapsucker cutting the inner bark; another notes that it pecks out the inner bark and throws it over its shoulder; another says that it only drinks the sap; another finds it making long rows of holes vertically on the tree and not encircling it.

Unusual Notes.

We rarely have notes on the migration of the Night Heron but on Oct. 4th in Connecticut a large flight was noted, estimated as high as 5,000 birds. On Oct. 6th a young European Shelduck (Tidornus canardus) was brought into this office in the flesh, taken off the coast of Essex County, Mass. Its plumage was in good condition and it showed no signs of having been kept in captivity. Apparently this is the first North American record for the species.

Edward Howe Forbush,
Director, Division of Ornithology.

An observer writes from Vermont that a flock of 40 Golden Plover was feeding near his house all day Oct. 15th.

Oct. 15, 1921.

So much belated news has come in that we are obliged to add another page to convey this information.

Notwithstanding the mildness of the season here there is evidence of exceeding cold in the north which is shown by flights of waterfowl and by a few reports from some of our observers farthest north; also by a very heavy flight of land birds which has taken place within the past ten days. In the north country beavers are storing food early for the winter and deer are taking on their winter coats earlier than usual. On Oct. 3 about 2 o'clock in the afternoon Surf Scoters began to come in on a southeaster in numbers for the first time this season at Minot's Light. Soon afterwards there were reports of waterfowl from the interior and since that time Geese, Brant, Ducks and Gulls have been reported both on the coast and in the interior in migration. Land birds have been unusually numerous, particularly the sparrows, for more than a week. There has been a considerable flight of Kinglets of both species. From the 11th to the 14th there was a great migration of Hawks in the woods of northern Ontario. The flight of Red breasted Nuthatches seems to have passed and a few Northern Shrikes are reported in the Provinces. The recent migration of land birds appears to have reached to Virginia and North Carolina. Many Gulls have appeared on the Virginia coast. Migrating flocks of Crows, Robins, Sparrows, Goldfinches, Purple Finches, Pipits and other land birds have been reported in the north and Snow Buntings are beginning to appear. Chickadees and Bluejays have become numerous in most of southern New England. In western Massachusetts Tree Sparrows and Fox Sparrows now appear in some numbers and Juncos are very abundant, but so far there are no reports of Pine Grosbeaks and very few of Pine Siskins. A few late Red-eyed Vireos passed south through Massachusetts early last week and Blue-headed Vireos were migrating. There are local reports of a Woodcock flight. Unusual numbers of Pileated Woodpeckers are reported locally also from northern New England. A single Kumlien's Gull has been noted on the Massachusetts coast. A very large flight of Wood Ducks has passed through central Massachusetts and Connecticut. There was a considerable flight of Wilson's Snipe the first week in the month.

We are receiving from time to time notes on the use of the wings under water by Loons and Grebes. There is now evidence enough to show conclusively that those who believe that these birds do not use their wings in subaqueous swimming are wrong. There is need of a thorough investigation of their habits and we hope that all who have opportunities to watch them in clear, deep water will do so.

Edward Howe Forbush,
Director, Division of Ornithology.

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NOTES FOR OBSERVERS

Office of the Director, Division of Ornithology,
136 State House, Boston, Mass.

November 15, 1921.

Weather changes have been frequent during the last fifteen days, and flights of birds have come with them. In southern New England and southern New York the weather has been quite generally mild with some cold nights and stormy days, but in northern Maine and in parts of the Provinces cold waves and snowstorms have occurred.

At present the following birds are here or may be looked for: Grebes and Loons of all our common species are off the coast. Kittiwakes have appeared in Massachusetts waters. Great flights of Ducks have drifted southward. Many are still here. Among those that have recently appeared about the ponds of Boston are a few Hooded Mergansers at least two miles in fine plumage. The flight of geese continues and that of Brant is increasing. A considerable number of Canvasbacks are reported from Martha's Vineyard. Green-winged Teals and Old-Squaws are here. The late flight of Great Blue Herons along the coast may be expected now. A few shore birds -- Greater Yellow-legs, Sandpipers, Red-bucks, Purple Sandpipers and Black-bellied Plovers, also a few King Rails and Sora are noted.

A large flight of Barred Owls has been noted in Maine. There is a movement in the North of Three-toed Woodpeckers. A few Sapsuckers are still here. Since the month came in, a Kingbird has been reported several times on Cape Cod, and two or possibly three Arkansas Kingbirds on Cape Cod and Martha's Vineyard. Horned Larks are becoming numerous, particularly along the coast. There is a movement of Blue Jays and Canada Jays in the Provinces and in northern Maine. Crows have now left many northern regions. Cowbirds and Red-winged Blackbirds are still present on Cape Cod in considerable numbers. Grackles, which were seen in Essex County, Mass. in numerous flocks last month, have been moving southward and have decreased much in numbers. There are fewer reports now of Rusty Blackbirds. Evening Grosbeaks in small flocks are reported widely from the Provinces to Pennsylvania, while Pine Grosbeaks, Redpolls and Siskins evidently are working southward. Among the large flocks of Snow Buntings, a few Lapland Longspurs are beginning to appear. Most of the Sparrows have gone south. Fox Sparrows are still here. Juncos and Tree Sparrows are rather abundant locally and a few Chipping Sparrows have been noted recently on Cape Cod. Ipswich Sparrows also have been reported. Shrikes have been rather common during the last few weeks. A few Catbirds still remain in western Massachusetts. The great flight of Red-breasted Nuthatches has passed, but a few still remain. No more Ruby-crowned Kinglets have been reported but a few Golden-crowned Kinglets are here. Most of the Thrushes have passed but a few Hermit Thrushes remain. Robins are not uncommon in some localities. No Bluebirds have been noted during the past few days.

We have sent out to many of our correspondents the following questions. We hope that some of our observers may be able to answer them.

Questions.

Do you know of any credible evidence to sustain the ancient belief that Wood Ducks or any other ducks that nest in hollow trees sometimes carry their young from nest to water, and if so, how were the young birds carried?

Have you known any surface-feeding duck, swan, or goose to dive; if so, what species and under what circumstances?

Have you known any diving duck to cling when wounded to an object on the bottom until death ensued? If so, when, where and what species?

These Questions May Be Answered On This Sheet.

EDWARD HOWE FORBUSH,

Director, Division of Ornithology.

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COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
Department of Agriculture
136 State House, Boston.

Dr. Arthur W. Gilbert, Commissioner.

Division of Ornithology
E. H. Forbush, Director

December 15, 1922.

NOTES FOR OBSERVERS

In late November, despite the extreme cold, the large lakes in the Maine Woods and some in the Maritime Provinces had not frozen, perhaps on account of high winds, and in some of these lakes thousands of ducks and geese remained. Probably the much greater drops in temperature since that time have driven many of these birds to migrate farther south. About the second of the month geese resumed their flight southward all over New England. This flight continued until the 9th when very many geese were reported moving southward not only along the New England coast but also in the interior. On the first of the month immense numbers of White-winged and Surf scoters were reported on local feeding grounds off Cape Cod. Most ducks that winter here have now been seen off the Massachusetts coast.

Reports continue to come in regarding Saw-whet Owls, while a few Richardson's Owls have been seen or taken from Maine to Massachusetts. Apparently eagles were more common than usual during the past month. Several of these birds, from want of other prey, took poultry. This habit soon brings them into public notice. Very few crossbills, redpolls, Pine Grosbeaks or Evening Grosbeaks have been reported south of the three northern New England states; the latter appear to be very scarce everywhere in New England. These birds may not come this month but they should be looked for now. A few Fox Sparrows have been reported throughout most of the month in the three southern New England states. A very few Towhees and Vesper and Swamp Sparrows and a considerable number of White-throated Sparrows still remain in the coastal regions of southern New England. White-throated Sparrows are numerous locally from New York southward and recently have been singing. Land birds are scarce generally in southern New England. There are localities, however, in which the fruit of the red cedar and the bayberry is unusually abundant and in these regions we may expect to find the birds that feed on these fruits. Many Cedar Waxwings and Myrtle Warblers are reported in some localities. Thus far comparatively few Shrikes have been reported this month.

Just before the recent snowstorm a lady observed several woodpeckers climbing the trees. An elderly friend said: "Whenever you see a Woodpecker going up a tree, it is a sure sign of a snow-storm." Is this a fair sample of the predictions of our weather prophets?

One of our observers in Maine had a tame Crow which had learned to utter a few words distinctly. The first time the bird attempted to follow its mistress to town it suddenly swooped down beside her, spread its wings and tail, fluttered, and said in the most friendly

way, "Hello! Hello!" She said, "Come, Beppo, come home, nice little Beppo." It answered very plainly, "I won't. I won't." It was some twenty minutes before she could entice it back to the house.

RANDOM NOTES.

Dec. 2, 3 Mockingbirds were reported at the Arnold Arboretum in Boston. A Duck Hawk was seen flying toward the Custom House tower on Dec. 8 and may be still using the tower for his headquarters. There is a belated report of a young Red-headed Woodpecker well out on Cape Cod Nov. 14. A Virginia Rail was reported from Essex County, Mass., Dec. 14. Many Starlings remain in the north and among them one albino has been reported. From Nov. 30 to Dec. 2 a Wilson's Black-cap was seen near the southern coast of Connecticut. A veritable Wood Ibis is reported from Maine which was blown ashore some two months ago at Harpswell! A large flock of Evening Grosbeaks was seen Dec. 10 in northeastern Bristol County, Mass. In this flock were very many males. Many more appeared than were seen last year in the same locality.

WARNING:- Look out for OWLS: Snowy, Great Horned, Hawk, Richardson's, Acadian, Long-eared and Short-eared. All are moving.

BIRD BANDING.

Mr. Aaron C. Bagg writes on Dec. 5 from Holyoke, Mass., that he has taken the first return record of the year-- a Tree Sparrow banded for the first time in February last. Since that time three more of these birds, formerly banded at his place, have returned and been taken in the traps. It will be interesting to see if they remain for the winter.

It is important to catch and band as many Flickers as possible. Data in regard to the migration flight of the Flicker is wanting. The first definite record was made in 1905. A bird tagged on May 29 of that year in Keota, Keokuk County, Iowa, was taken on Christmas day at Many, Sabine Parish, La., about 650 miles south of its breeding grounds. Thus far we believe there is no such published record regarding the migration of the Flicker on the Atlantic coast region. This first record was made by Mr. P. A. Taverner, the eminent Canadian naturalist, who wrote in 1906: "Careful trapping in the shrubbery about the house might show whether the same birds migrate over the same path year after year or not." He also wrote at that time: "There seems to be no other field that promises such important results with so little hard work as this does."

In June, in Denmark, died Hans Christian Mortensen, aged 67, who may be fairly termed the pioneer of modern bird banding. Herr Mortensen banded 6,000 birds, with such success that his method of original research became thoroughly established with our cousins across the water.

The date of the Annual Meeting of the New England Bird Banding Association has been changed to January 17. The place will be announced in the next "ITEMS".

Edward Howe Forbush,
Director.

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NOTES FOR OBSERVERS

Office of the Director, Division of Ornithology
136 State House, Boston,
Massachusetts.

January 16, 1922.

The temperature during the first half of January has not been far from normal, but the snow-fall has been rather light. There have been two periods of low temperatures, but in most places in southern New England the thermometer has not reached zero, and in few localities has it gone much below the zero mark. The ice-storm of late November evidently much decreased the numbers of the common resident winter birds, and since that time they have been comparatively scarce. There has been no great influx of northern arboreal birds, but many water birds have continued to come and go.

Holboell's Grebes are still seen on our coast in small numbers, but Horned Grebes are rarely reported. Apparently they have passed to the southward. Loons also seem scarce. But Dovekies, Razor-billed Auks and Brunnich's Murres are much more numerous than last winter. Evidently some disturbance has occurred in the north, and at sea there must have been tremendous storms, for Dovekies have been scattered over all the New England seaboard. Along the coast of Nova Scotia hundreds have come ashore dead. These are believed to have starved to death, but some picked up dead in the interior of Massachusetts have been found to have full gullets.

Common Cormorants occasionally are reported. Locally on the coast there are rather unusual numbers of Black-backed Gulls during and after storms, and White-winged Gulls have been reported, probably either Iceland or Glaucous Gulls. On the first of the month there were a few Bonaparte's Gulls on the Massachusetts coast. Among the ducks Buffleheads seem to be abundant. The usual winter species are here, with perhaps fewer Surf Scoters and White-winged Scoters than usual north of Cape Cod. Early in January two Barrow's Golden-eyes were reported on the coast of Essex County, Mass., and recently a King Eider has been taken among the many Eiders that have come ashore on Nantucket dead or disabled by oil.

A few Night Herons still remain along the coast, and one Great Blue Heron has been reported. Grouse seem to be doing well. Since the last ice storm some Pheasants have been frozen in or have lost their tails in the ice. Mourning Doves are reported locally in large numbers on Cape Cod and a few also in Worcester County, Mass. The Duck Hawk is reported as still wintering in Boston. There seems practically

Jan. 16, 1922.

no winter flight of Goshawks and Horned Owls from the far north. There has been an immense migration of Barred Owls in the interior, but they have been fewer along the coastal plain of New England, where however a small flight of Snowy Owls has taken place. There are more reports of Acadian Owls than usual at this season. Long-eared and Short-eared Owls are still reported in New England. One observer in Connecticut reports a Long-eared Owl roosting for many days in the same tree.

Kingfishers are wintering as usual along the coast. We have received a number of reports about peculiar birds, the descriptions of which seem to indicate Canada Jays; in addition to the two observed in Worcester County last month we now have a report of another in Essex County, which may be authentic, as the observer had an excellent opportunity to watch the bird. Red-winged Blackbirds are reported in numbers on Cape Cod, and a few also in the Connecticut valley. Cowbirds are noted as usual on the Cape, but only one Catbird has been reported this month. Starlings have disappeared from many localities, but are numerous in others. They go where food is plentiful. This is true also of English Sparrows.

Apparently the great body of Northern Shrikes has passed to the southward, but some remain. The number of Mockingbirds reported this winter probably exceeds that of any other winter, at least in our recollection. Most of these birds are in the coastal region. Evidently Mockingbirds are increasing in the north-east. Several are in Maine. Four Mockingbirds have been shot by mistake for shrikes. It should be noted that both Shrikes and Mockingbirds are protected by law.

Pine Grosbeaks, Evening Grosbeaks and Redpolls do not seem to increase much in numbers. Several Chipping Sparrows(?) have been reported from Cape Cod, and some Savannah Sparrows from Connecticut. The great flight of Red-breasted Nuthatches passed to the south, but a few have remained in New England. A few Brown-capped Chickadees are reported in southern New England and farther north. Undoubtedly there is a slight southward movement of this species. Along the coast of the southern part of New England Robins, Bluebirds and Myrtle Warblers are reported as usual.

Unusual Notes

A Pennsylvania correspondent happened on the scene of a fracas between an eagle and a fox. On his approach the eagle flew off, leaving the fox dead, disembowelled but still warm, with some eagle feathers in its mouth, and the mark of the eagle's talons on its body. A Massachusetts observer writes that a bachelor Blue Jay, with a cracked voice and a short temper, has been coming to his feeding station for two winters, and has remained in the neighborhood winter and summer.

EDWARD HOWE FORBUSH,

Director, Division of Ornithology

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NOTES FOR OBSERVERS

Office of the Director, Division of Ornithology
136 State House, Boston
Massachusetts

March 15, 1922.

People who complain of the rigors of winter may not realize how we in Massachusetts have been favored. There has been a hard winter in northern New England. In northern Vermont there have been 121 days of sleighing up to March 11, and 88.06 inches of snow fell. An observer who has been on a long trip in the woods of northern Aroostook County, Maine, writes that the squirrels which were so plentiful there last autumn have almost disappeared during the inclement winter.

March is the month of wild-fowl. All the way up from the Antilles to the southern Canadian Provinces they are moving. In the interior they are keeping pace with the disappearing ice, arriving first in the open springs, streams and rivers. Blue-winged Teals were still abundant in Porto Rico on March 4, but the hardier wild-fowl, such as Scoters, Old-squaws, Golden-eyes, Mergansers and Eiders are already moving toward the frozen north. Canada Geese have been reported quite widely both on the coast and in the interior. Now is the time to watch for wild-fowl in the springs, streams and ponds, wherever there is open water. A northward movement of Red-breasted Mergansers along the coast has begun and should be at its height the last week of the month. A few Dovekies, Brunnich's Murres and Razor-billed Auks are still here.

February 24 on Long Island, New York, there was some evidence of returning Song Sparrows, and on the 26th there was an increase in the number of Meadowlarks. In southern New England the northward movement of winter birds, which began late in February, was followed the first week in March by a flight of water-fowl and crows. March 12 Crows were observed migrating by moonlight in Middlesex County, Mass., until 9 P.M. Before March 8 ended a noticeable influx of early spring birds had begun. Red-winged Blackbirds, Bronzed Grackles, Song Sparrows, Meadowlarks and Robins came in small numbers at first. There was a distinct bird wave on the 7th, and after that the numbers of spring birds increased, particularly Red-wings and Grackles, which were seen in immense flocks locally. Bluebirds have been scattering until within the last few days, and only a few large flocks of robins have been reported. There are records of Rusty Blackbirds. Juncos and Brown Creepers are passing. Fox Sparrows appeared unusually early, 14 were noted in southern Connecticut March 4, and since then the species has been reported widely in small numbers in Massachusetts. Two Vesper Sparrows, several Field Sparrows and a Phoebe have been reported. Snow Buntings in nearly perfect spring plumage and singing were seen in northern Vermont March 4.

Far up in the northern Maine spruce forests insects have killed many trees in some sections, and bark beetles and borers have attacked the dead and dying trees. Hundreds of both species of Three-toed Woodpeckers, Downies and Hairies, with unerring instinct have congregated there.

Song Sparrows, Tree Sparrows, Meadowlarks, Juncos and Prairie Horned Larks have been singing much. A Mockingbird began singing on Cape Cod March 4. He imitated the cat, robin, red-wing and the creaking of an un-oiled wheelbarrow. A Blue Jay, not to be outdone, imitated each mieu of the kitten. March 6 a dead Long-billed Marsh Wren was reported from Cape Cod.

On the 11th there was a "deluge" of Song Sparrows in Rhode Island. On the 6th some Crows were mated, and at least one pair has already begun a nest. On the 14th a Catbird flew against a window in Worcester, and lay stunned on the ground for several seconds, while the observer watched it. Probably this was a wintering bird.

There is a report from Rhode Island that most of the small land birds disappeared on the night of the 5th, and a few days later other birds from the south began to appear. A Grebe seen there recently appears from the description to have been a Pied-billed Grebe.

There are great numbers of field mice now on Nantucket. These are preyed upon by Short-eared Owls, of which we saw nine there in two days. The birds seem to follow their prey day and night. There must be a large number of them now on the Island, and it would be well for the Nantucketers to protect them, otherwise the irruption of field mice may become serious.

There have been widespread reports of Killdeer Plovers during the last two weeks.

There is a movement of Red-tailed and Red-shouldered Hawks, and possibly a movement of Sparrow Hawks, as unusual numbers have been reported the past week, but some have been noted all winter.

A Great Blue Heron has been reported from the coast of Maine throughout most of the winter, and is said to be still there. It ~~appears that~~ a Canada Jay (.) has been wintering within ten miles of Boston. It was still there last night. The bird has roosted in a spruce grove and habitually on a particular tree, and has fed often from a feeding table. During the winter it lost its tail and has grown a new one. A Mockingbird also has fed at the same place. These two species do not often meet. This leads us to remark again that we have never known of so many Mockingbirds wintering in New England as have been reported during this season.

On March 9 a Great Northern Shrike, which has been killing Chickadees at a feeding station, was knocked out of a tree by the irate lady of the house. The bird dropped its prey, which proved to be a young rat.

Nesting boxes for bird trapping should be erected as soon as possible. The birds begin looking over nesting places soon after they arrive. Bluebirds and Tree Swallows are coming now in parts of southern New England, and some Bluebirds have already arrived in Vermont and Maine.

We cannot advertise dealers in traps or trap-nesting-boxes in these bulletins, but information regarding them will be given upon request.

The circular of information to bird-banders, to be issued shortly by the Bureau of Biological Survey, will contain details for making the "Pull-string Trap" for trapping birds. Trapping for banding is of the greatest importance, and it is hoped that all members of the bird-banding society will, if possible, operate traps; and this one to which we refer may be made very cheaply at home.

All banders, as required under the by-laws of the Association, are hereby reminded to send a duplicate of each record of a bird banded to Mrs. A. B. Harrington, Recording Secretary, 136 State House, Boston, Mass.

Mrs. W. H. Herrick, of Topsfield, Mass., who feeds Evening Grosbeaks annually, has had a flock during the latter part of the winter which has increased until now there are about 100 birds. She has a trap made of an old bird cage, arranged with a perch that breaks down in the center with the slightest weight, and this closes the door. The first bird taken and banded was a male Evening Grosbeak, which did not seem to be at all troubled by its experience, and when released flew to a tree near by.

Mr. Aaron C. Bagg, of Holyoke, Mass., caught and banded the first Song Sparrow three hours after it appeared. He reported on March 6 that nearly all of his wintering Tree Sparrows had gone. Mr. Bagg has been very successful, and has trapped and banded most of the birds which have come lately to his place. As soon as he sees a bird without a band on its right leg, he knows that it is a new one. He has had an increase of Juncos recently and more Tree Sparrows. Some of his Chickadees have learned to feed in the trap and find their way out again.

Special Notice

According to the by-laws of the Bird Banding Association, the annual dues of one dollar are not payable until July 1, 1922. Inasmuch as this movement has gained great headway and has gone beyond the anticipation of its officers, there is much expense attached to its maintenance. Thus far most of the expense has been met personally by the Treasurer. This should not be. Therefore, we respectfully request you to anticipate the July payment, if convenient. This is not a demand, but merely a suggestion, so that the organization may proceed comfortably. Please send checks or money to Laurence B. Fletcher, Treasurer, 50 Congress St., Room 940, Boston, Mass.

Edward Howe Forbush,
Director, Division of Ornithology.

We have contributed three illustrated articles on birds to "American Forestry", in which we have taken the liberty to insert some observations obtained from certain correspondents. We take this way of notification. It would be impossible to write each one. The first article is in the March number.

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
100 State House, Boston.

Dr. M. M. Gilstrap, Commissioner.

Division of Ornithology
E. H. Forbush, Director.

April 17, 1922.

NOTES FOR OBSERVERS

Here they come! Grabs, Loons, Herons, Gulls, Double-crested Cormorants, Greater Yellow-legs, Piping Plovers, Ospreys, and other Hawks, Owls, Kingfishers, Sapsuckers, Winter Wrens, Toweens, and other early birds. The worms must look out!

Sparrows: Most of the immense flight of Song, Tree and Fox Sparrows and Juncos, that was represented at nearly every place in southern New England where food could be found on April 1, 2 and 3, moved on into the north during the warm wave April 7-10, and Vesper, Swamp, Field, Clipping, Savannah and White-throated Sparrows and Purple Finches came in from the south, either in large flocks or in small numbers, and swept on, some reaching Maine and parts of the Provinces. On the 9th the Savannah Sparrow was recorded from Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, a week ahead of schedule time. Few Goldfinches have been reported yet in New England, and they were still numerous in South Carolina April 12.

Warblers: Only Yellow Palm, Pine, Black and White and Myrtle Warblers have been heard from as yet, and probably the Myrtles are mostly wintering birds (now in changing plumage). South Carolina (inland) writes April 12: "am surprised at lack of warblers, almost none yet, not even Myrtle."

Swallows: Tree Swallows were recorded at Kingston, Ontario, April 9, and one at Yarmouth, N.S., April 11. A Purple Martin was reported near the Penobscot River, Maine, on the same date, April 11. (Earliest date).

Nuthatches: We hear of no flight of Red-breasted Nuthatches in southern New England, but numbers have been reported moving in the woods of northern Maine and northern Ontario.

Thrushes: are coming up through the southern states as usual, and Hermit Thrushes have been heard from in many places, - New York, Ontario, southern New England and Vermont.

Robins and Bluebirds: The great flight of migrating Robins went north with the Sparrows a week ago, and they have begun to appear in northern Maine and the Provinces. Bluebirds went with them.

Waxwings: Only two flocks of Cedar Waxwings have been reported as yet. Apparently if there has been an early flight we have missed it. Perhaps the reason of their rarity is that wild fruits on which these birds feed in winter are scarce in New England.

April 17, 1922.

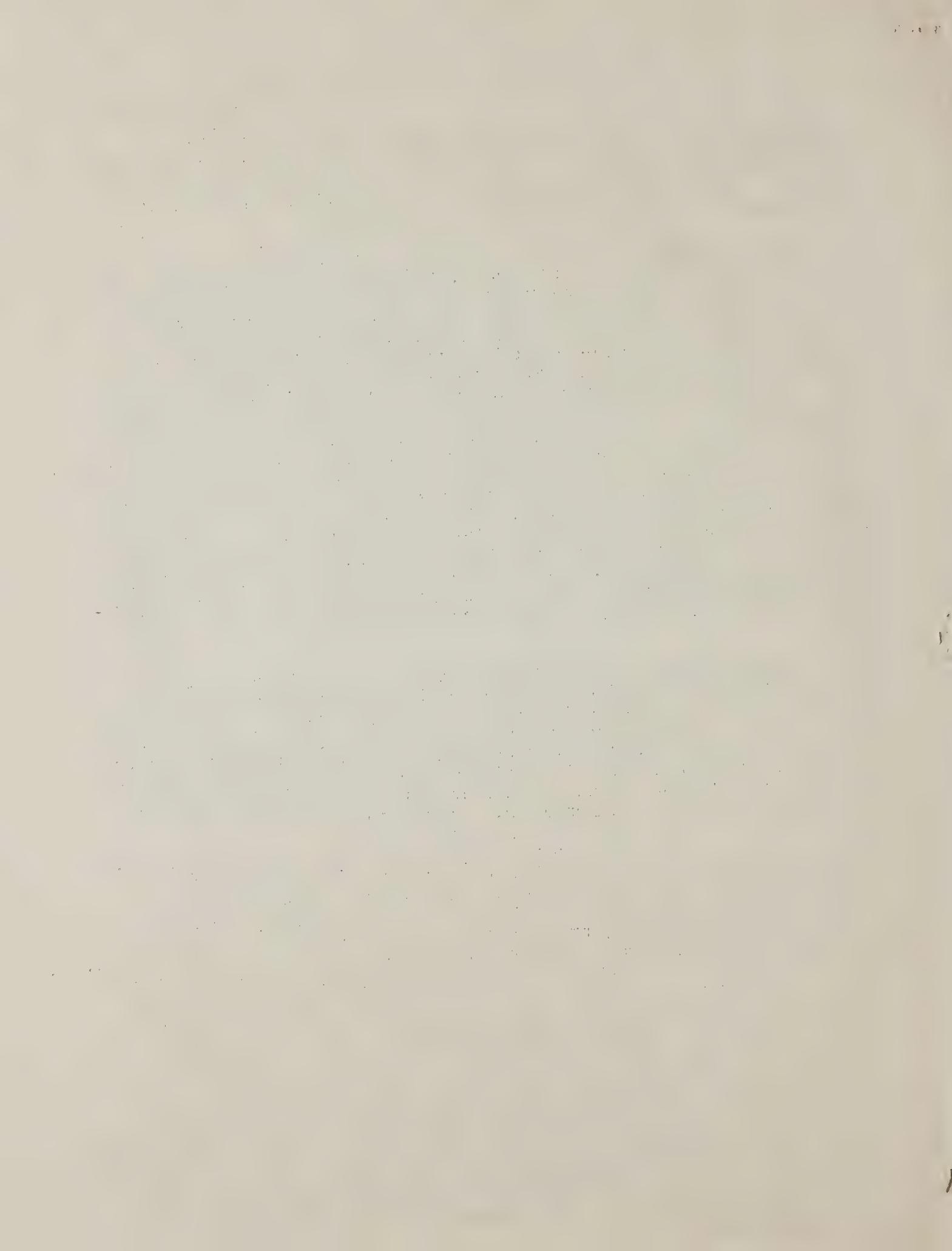
Much of the water-fowl flight has passed. Woodcocks have been singing their flight song for weeks, and Snipes are reported along the river meadows. Now is the time to watch the Bitterns "pump". Floods have driven many out of the lower meadows to the fields where their behavior may be watched.

Early Records: Six Barn Swallows were reported on the 9th from Ontario, and there are four New England reports and one of a Cliff Swallow. Two Rose-breasted Grosbeaks (?) were reported on the 10th from northern Vermont. The lady who reported these ought to know the species, as it nests annually on her grounds. A Brown Thrasher was recorded in southern Ontario April 2. A Lincoln's Sparrow was reported from east-central Vermont on March 27. We did not record this in the last "Items", as we doubted the record. We are now satisfied. The observer, who is reliable, writes us that he positively identified it on the first occasion and has verified the identification on several subsequent occasions. The bird has been singing. We have never seen Lincoln's Sparrow in Massachusetts until after May 1. This bird was more than a month ahead of schedule time and had no business to be in Vermont on the 27th of March. (See the bird books.) Below says that birds are very rude, they contradict us often. Look out for Blue Grosbeaks. Three have been reported already, one in Connecticut Feb. 21. Experience has convinced us that stragglers of any species may occur here weeks ahead of their usual dates.

Random Notes: A few Pipits were reported late in March. The wintering of Killdeer Plovers in Connecticut has been verified by weekly reports extending through the winter. There has been a wave of Golden-crowned and Ruby-crowned Kinglets and Brown Creepers through southern New England. A Migrant Shrike was recorded in Vermont March 27, another April 8, and another April 6 in Berkshire County, Mass., and a Lapland Longspur was reported from northern Maine on April 10. Large flocks of Redpolls were then moving through the woods in that region.

An immense flight of Geese has passed northward. An observer on Cape Cod reports that as "hundreds" of Geese were passing over his house, the leader left the great flock, "milling around", went back to the bay, picked up several small bunches of geese, brought them to the main flock, and then led them all northward. Brants are moving northward on the coast.

During the snowstorm April 1 many Robins were observed eating rose hips. While the storm raged large numbers of Juncos and sparrows were seen to go into a heap of brush to roost at night. In the morning at sunrise they poured out "like a swarm of bees". The observer said that it was the prettiest sight he had ever seen. On April 13 a Barred Owl called at City Hall, Boston. We have not learned whether he secured an audience with the Mayor. A Long-eared Owl has roosted in a group of spruce trees in Connecticut nearly all winter. These trees stand from 25 to 100 feet from the street railway and from 20 to 50 feet from a house. The observer saw the bird there on 80 days. Short-eared Owls also have wintered near by, twelve were seen in one day. Some mice there! The Canada Jay near Boston was still there April 4.



April 17, 1922.

There has been much complaint in Massachusetts and New Hampshire this winter regarding the budding of apple trees by Ruffed Grouse. Some trees in western Massachusetts were nearly stripped. Pine Grosbeaks have done likewise, probably caused by lack of the usual wild fruit, and increase of Grouse. A White-winged Crossbill has been seen about Manchester, N.H., for some time. Many birds have been reported drinking sap from maple trees injured by the storm.

A Robin in Springfield got so fond of graham crackers during the snowstorm that it was hard to get rid of him. An observer reports a male robin talking to himself. She was within two feet of the bird, which muttered to itself for half an hour. Every time Mrs. Phoebe called the Robin looked at her and started muttering again. Many birds have soft conversational notes that can be heard at a distance of only a few feet.

Between now and May first most of the wintering Mockingbirds may be expected to disappear from our New England coastal region. They should be looked for inland. Also from now to the first of May look out for Sapsuckers, all the swallows, Northern Water Thrushes, the earlier warblers and vireos, Brown Thrashers, Towhees, Red-headed Woodpeckers, Swifts, Nighthawks, Whip-poor-wills, and nearly all the sparrows and thrushes. Some of these are due now, and others not due this month may appear unusually early.

An observer went to the "Boston Zoo" to see the Puffin which we sent there last winter, and afterward kindly sent us the following effusion:

I felt puffed out with joy and pride
When at the end of a long ride
To Franklin Park, I saw a Puffin.

My friends all laughed and wished to know
If 'twas his beauty thrilled me so?
I answered- beauty nuffin'!

'Tis rare enough, I said, to see 'um
Except defunct in a museum,
His was the natural stuffin'!

Unfortunately the poor Puffin has now gone the way of all flesh.

April 17, 1922.

BIRD BANDING

The snowstorm that ushered in the month brought a harvest to the bird banders. Mr. William P. Wharton, of Groton, banded 24 Fox Sparrows; Mr. A. C. Bagg, of Holyoke, banded 40 birds-Song Sparrows, Juncos, Tree Sparrows and Chickadees; Mr. A. J. Parker, of Lincoln, having no trap, used a wooden box, a stick and a string, and caught and banded 22 birds; Mrs. E. L. Burbank, of Sandwich, banded 29 birds, when her supply of bands gave out.

Mr. L. B. Fletcher writes that Mr. L. R. Talbot, President of the Brookline Bird Club, has handled at Thomasville, Georgia, 1,578 birds up to April 1, during a period of about a month. Of the birds taken, 37 were birds which had been taken at the same place in previous years and banded; 284 were birds that had never been banded. The rest were repeaters. A Chipping Sparrow, No. 22735, holds the record as a repeater, having been retaken within a month 34 times besides the original capture. Apparently either the bird is not frightened when captured, or he enjoys the excitement that he finds in being taken. Many birds seem to enjoy being trapped. Mr. Maurice Bowen, of Middleboro, Mass., has a Mourning Dove that gets into the trap so often that he has become a nuisance. Mr. Talbot banded the following species and subspecies, up to April 4: Blue Jay, Florida Blue Jay, Brown Thrasher, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Mockingbird, Chipping Sparrow, Hermit Thrush, Myrtle Warbler, Cardinal, White-throated Sparrow, Junco, White-eyed Towhee, Palm Warbler, Field Sparrow, Song Sparrow and Mourning Dove.

Warning

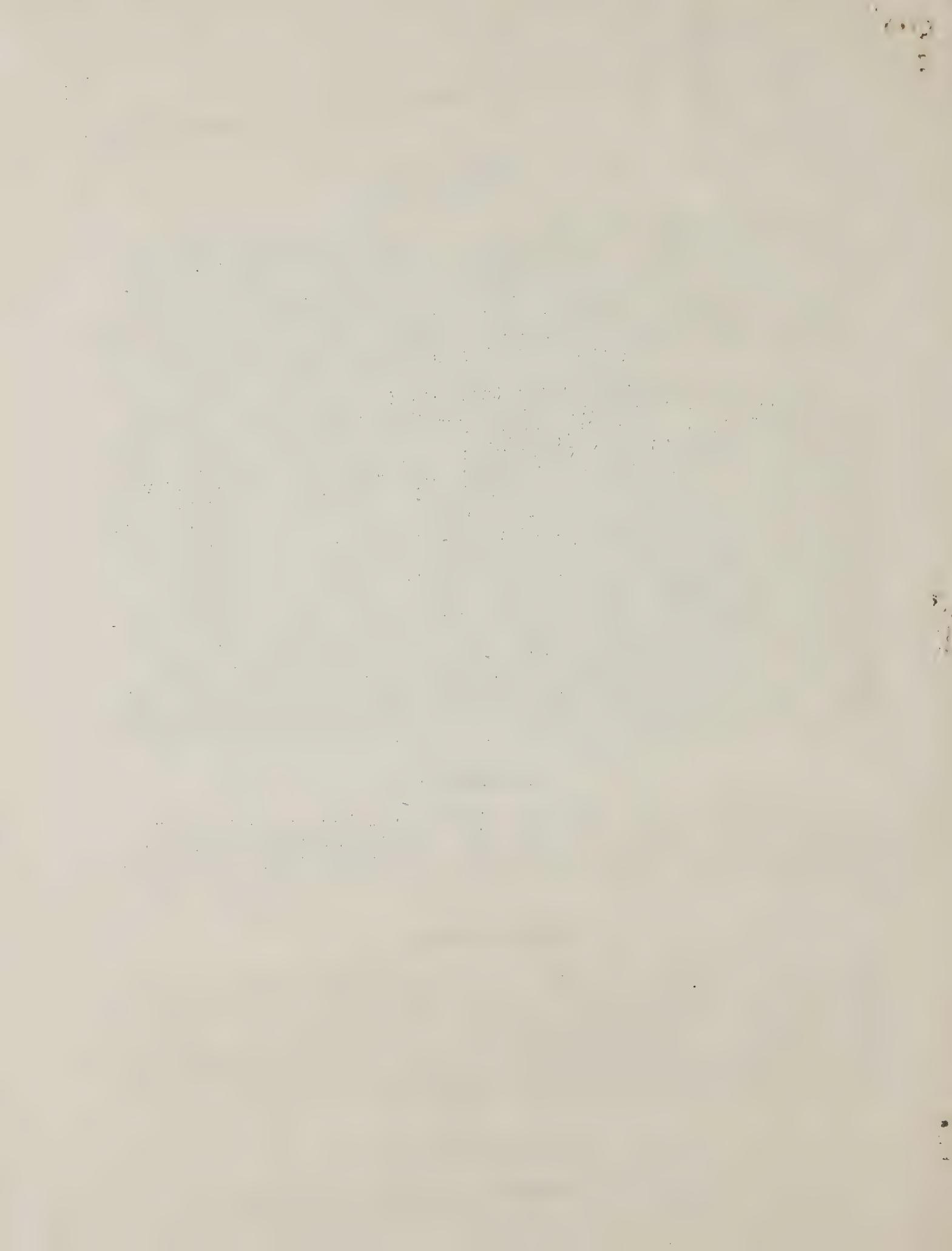
Never leave traps unwatched, unless the back door is open so that the birds can go in and out. If not watched, birds in the traps may be molested by children, hawks, shrikes, cats, dogs, squirrels or rats. The latter can easily follow the birds into the trap.

Special Notice

Mr. L. R. Talbot, who has just returned from Georgia, where he has been trapping and banding birds for Mr. S. Prentiss Baldwin, will give his experiences on April 25 before the Brookline Bird Club, at the Brookline Public Library, at 8 o'clock P.M. To all those interested in bird banding this talk will be of particular interest, and we sincerely hope that bird banders within a reasonable distance of Boston will make an effort to attend.

EDWARD HOWE FORBUSH

Director, Division of Ornithology.



COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
Department of Agriculture
156 State House, Boston.

Dr. Arthur W. Gilbert, Commissioner.

Division of Ornithology
E. H. Forbush, Director.

May 15, 1922.

NOTES FOR OBSERVERS

The first fifteen days of May are in many ways the best days of the year for the bird student. The foliage has not developed enough to hinder observation and in ordinary years most of the species arrive before the 15th. There has been so much cool weather during the past week, however, that migration seems to have been somewhat delayed. While nearly all the species have come, the numbers of individuals in many cases have been small.

The cuckoos, all the warblers, including Black-polls and Chats, practically all the sparrows, all the thrushes and vireos are here or passing; Baltimore and Orchard Orioles, tanagers, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks and all the flycatchers, except the Yellow-bellied Flycatcher. There has been rather an unusual spring flight of pipits, and more than the usual number of Brewster's warblers have been recorded. Tennessee and Cape May Warblers are seen in many localities. A reliable observer in southeastern Massachusetts reports that Tennessee Warblers were practically absent from a cemetery when a sudden thunder storm or "tempest" came on, - immediately thereafter numbers of Tennessee Warblers thronged the place. Were the birds (migrating by daylight at great height) forced to descend by the sudden storm?

Small numbers of Evening Grosbeaks are still here in Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Maine, but they are decreasing and probably most of them will disappear with the present southerly weather. The great late flight of Loons and Red-throated Loons has been passing along the coast. Many Scaups and Red-breasted Mergansers have been reported south of Cape Cod since May 1. The spring flight of shore birds is passing and will reach its height between now and June 1.

The first week of the month was cool in South Carolina, but a change to hot weather and southerly winds came the second week, and the migrants went through with a rush, while practically all the summer birds appeared. Here the migration may reach its height now any day. Quite a large flight of Sharp-shinned Hawks passed along the Massachusetts coastal region during the past week. Many Cedar Waxwings still remain in the south, but there is an increase of arrivals in Massachusetts. Goldfinches are scarce still in many localities, but a female was reported this week carrying nesting material.

Random Notes

An observer in Franklin County, Mass., recently reported a bird which, if the description is correct, probably was a Swallow-tailed Kite. A Turkey Vulture has been taken in Connecticut.

Nest building is now going on everywhere. Some birds have already hatched young. Perhaps the earliest nesting species after street doves and English sparrows is the Prairie Horned Lark. A pair which had raised young already was reported recently with another nest and eggs.

An observer reports a Chipping Sparrow's nest lined with human hair, some of it short and light colored, evidently from the head of a child. Some longer and gray. This has a gruesome sound, and reminds us of the Indian and his gory scalps, ranging from childhood to old age, - but the Chippy may have visited the barber.

Newspaper articles recently have reported great numbers of birds killed by forest fires. No doubt Woodcocks and Grouse have been thus destroyed, as the devoted mother birds when incubating their eggs often shelter their precious charges until overcome by the flames. Small birds flying over a fire, particularly at night, are sometimes overcome by the fast ascending heat and fall into the flames. But there have not been very many birds in the woods this spring until quite recently. The destruction of birds by forest fires would be much greater if these conflagrations should occur the latter part of May or in June.

There are many reports of bird loves and battles. A male Bluebird savagely chased a House Wren. The scurrying wren suddenly disappeared. It had hidden in a receptacle for nesting material that had been put out for the birds. It burrowed into the soft mass until only its tail and the top of its head could be seen, and there it stayed all night.

Correction

In the Random Notes of April 17, the Tree Swallow was recorded from Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, on April 11, and the Savannah Sparrow on the 9th. Both were first seen on April 10. Our mistake.

BIRD BANDING NOTES

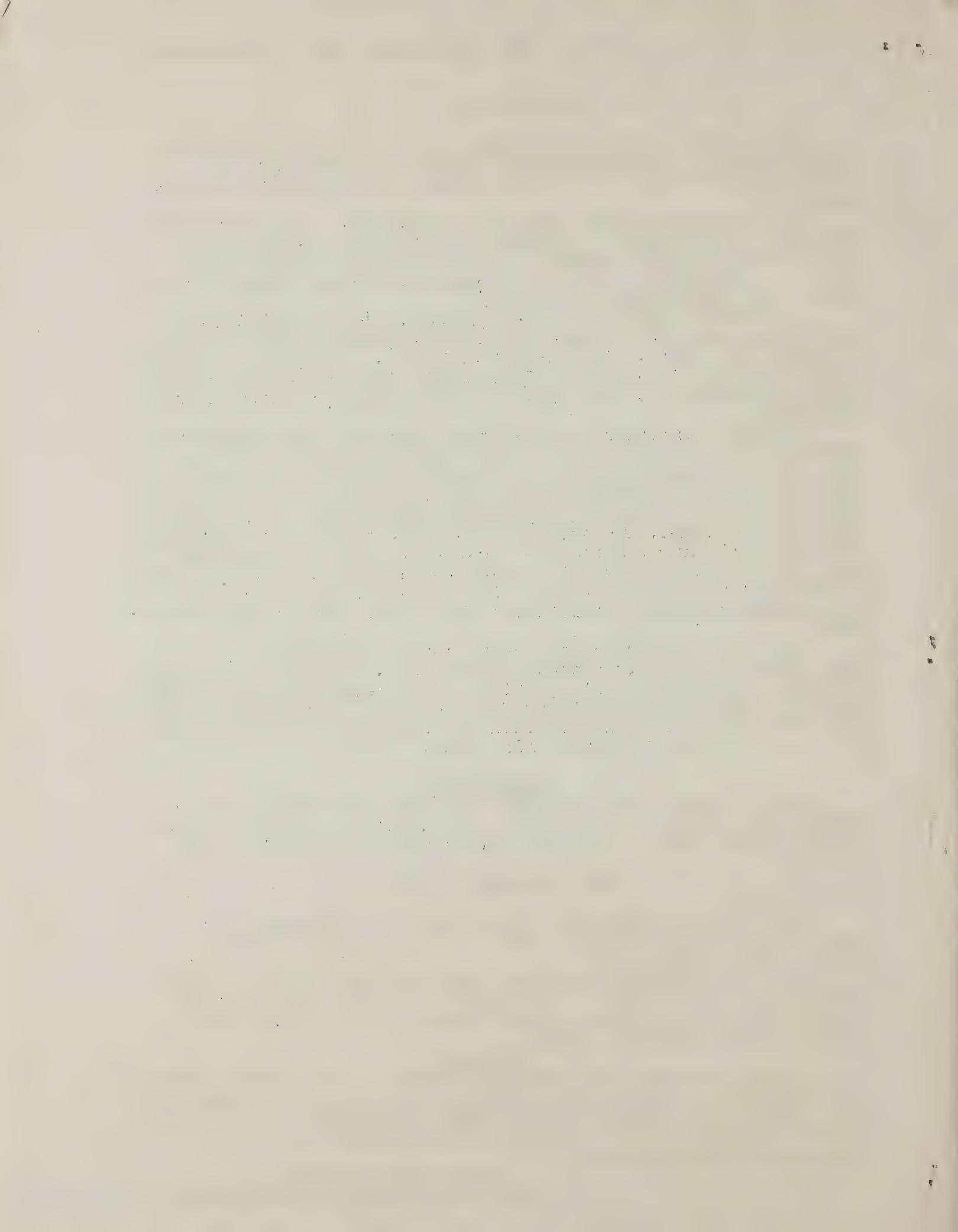
Our feathered friends of last year are returning. Mr. Harry Higbee took a Purple Finch May 10 this year which was banded May 13 last year.

Mr. L. B. Fletcher took Song Sparrow 11006 May 13, which was banded May 28, 1921. He banded a White-crowned Sparrow May 14, which he believes is the first of this species ever banded in New England. Next!

Warning

Do not put much food around or outside of the trap. Scatter it outside for several days, then in order to get birds into the trap, place none outside, except perhaps a little trail, but put nearly all food inside. If you do not follow this course, you may not get birds to band.

Edward Howe Forbush,
Director, Division of Ornithology.



COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
Department of Agriculture
136 State House, Boston.

Dr. Arthur W. Gilbert, Commissioner.

Division of Ornithology
Edward Howe Forbush, Director.

June 15, 1922.

NOTES FOR OBSERVERS

Again, as usual, some migrants appear to come straggling along in June, and many individuals are reported as arriving after June 1st. We desire to get information regarding the shore birds that are summering along the coast, and hope that those who are conveniently situated will watch the shores in June. We have received reports regarding the continued presence of several species on our coast up to about June 12. We cannot record these as migrants until we are sure whether or not they are remaining for the summer. Now we must conclude that the northward migration in New England is practically over.

Very Random Notes

Great Crested Flycatchers appear in unusual numbers in our notes for May and thus far in June.

On June 13 a Cerulean Warbler was reported from Franklin County, Mass., and the nest and eggs of this species have been recorded this year in New York State.

An observer in Plymouth County, Mass., is satisfied that he saw several Long-billed Curlews at one time during the migration. We have not seen one since 1876, and the species is supposed to be practically extirpated from the eastern states, but it is not extinct.

The usual reports of Passenger Pigeons continue to come in, but so far the birds have proved to be Mourning Doves.

An observer entering the bathroom one morning found a Chimney Swift awaiting him. It had come by the Santa Claus route, bearing no gifts, only soot. The same bird or another appeared last year about the same time in the same way.

There is one report of a Brown Creeper trying to walk head first down a tree trunk like a Nuthatch. Has anyone else seen this?

A small passenger entered a car on a railway train at Rockport and traveled to Boston, but the trainmen were unable to collect the fare. The bird was a Ruby-crowned Kinglet.

Regarding the one-legged Sandpipers reported recently, two observers send in a plausible explanation. One reports an entire flock of Semipalmated Sandpipers hopping about each on its one leg. While the observers were regarding this pitiful sight with great commiseration, every last one of the "little frauds" put down its other leg, which had been concealed in the feathers, and ran like a sprinter. The other observer gives an almost identical occurrence.

The recent storm blew down many nests and the hailstones doubtless killed many birds. An observer reports a large bird partly falling and partly circling down from a great height,

which finally "let go all" and fell apparently dead in a field. Others report nests blown down and dead young birds, another writes of a robin beaten to the ground.

A Blue Grosbeak was reported June 10 in Norfolk Co., Mass.

Immense numbers of Brants were seen in the waters of northern New Brunswick on May 31. One flock seemed to contain about 10,000 birds. The natives said that they had never seen so many Geese and Brants as during this migration.

A Blue Jay was seen eating what was supposed to be a young bird, but further investigation showed its prey was a mouse. It ate part of the mouse and later returned for more.

A young robin alighting on the top of an open window sash fell down between the two sashes. The lady who saw this was unable to reach the bird, but its mother fed it all day. At the end of the day its strength had so increased that it was able to escape without assistance.

BIRD BANDING

Members of the Association have banded 55 species of birds.

The Biological Survey has not been able to supply the demand for bands, which has been unexpectedly great. Every effort will be made to meet it in the future.

Miss Kathleen M. Hempel, Elkader, Iowa, banded a Catbird in June, 1921, which returned and was trapped again May 18, 1922.

Mr. R. E. Horsey, Rochester, N.Y., has arranged a trap to cover a bird bath, believing this to be the best and surest way to trap a variety of birds.

Insect Parasites of Birds.

Mr. Charles W. Johnson, Curator in the Museum of the Boston Society of Natural History, requests that we notify the bird banders of the importance of saving specimens of the insect parasites of birds, and making notes about them.

Two groups of insects infest birds, the Mallophaga, or biting bird-lice, and the bird-flies, a highly specialized family known as Hipposcidae. Over 250 species of the former have been recorded from North American birds, and probably about 100 of these may be found on the birds of New England, although the number recorded is comparatively small.

These are best placed in vials of alcohol, in which penciled slips with the locality, date, and name of bird should be placed.

The bird-flies are fewer in numbers and more difficult to capture, as they are very active. Probably the number of species on New England birds are few, but the records of these are so meager that any obtainable data on the species would be very desirable. The flies sometimes act as carriers for the Mallophaga, which cling to the body of the flying insect much as small birds have been said to travel on the backs of larger birds. The larva of another species of fly infests nestling birds. Several cases of this fly have been reported and observations on the habits are much desired.

Edward Howe Forbush
Director.

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

Department of Agriculture

136 State House Boston

Dr. Arthur W. Gilbert, Commissioner

Division of Ornithology

Edward Howe Forbush, Director

July 15, 1922.

NOTES FOR OBSERVERS

One result of the wet June was a terrible destruction of Chimney Swifts where extreme precipitation prevailed. A despatch from Damariscotta, Me., records that after the storm of the third week in June "nearly two wheelbarrows loads of Chimney Swallows were found dead at the bottom of a great unused chimney of the Twin Village Water Co." This may be exaggerated, but two similar occurrences were credibly reported in Massachusetts during June, 1903. "Five thousand" Chimney Swifts were said to have invaded the home of Frank V. Rice, of Kingston, N.Y., coming down the chimney and scattering soot over wall paper and furnishings. Swifts and Tree Swallows disappeared locally last June and did not return. Examination of chimneys and nesting boxes should be made for remains of dead birds. Fortunately the rainfall never is uniform in any region. Birds suffer least in the localities where the rainfall is lightest. Have Purple Martins been destroyed in New England this year as they were in Massachusetts in 1903? Torrential rains occurred in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and much of New England between July 1 and 8, causing floods and submerging nests, eggs and young of marsh birds and other low nesting birds. The St. John river in New Brunswick is said to have "raised 16 feet". Cloudbursts were reported that drowned woodpeckers and other birds nesting in tree holes. While New England has had remarkable rains, there has been a prolonged drought in the Chicago region.

Possibly the destruction of eggs and young birds by storms in New England may account for very early flocking of Cedar Waxwings, Bobolinks, Red-winged Blackbirds and Grackles, some of which may have failed to breed, and all of which were noted in flocks late in June or early in July, when "immense" gatherings of Grackles were reported. An observer in northern Vermont tells of "unbelievable" numbers of Chimney Swifts passing into the chimney of an abandoned house and into a hole in the roof of the barn. Had we seen them we should have watched the behavior of the roosting or nesting birds in that barn. Such an opportunity is rare indeed.

Numbers of Loons are summering on the Atlantic coast from Virginia to Maine. Straggling individuals or pairs were recorded in June in the interior of Massachusetts, but the only small young reported on our shores were two evidently hatched at or near sea level in Norfolk County, Mass.

Many hundreds of newly-hatched terns have been found dead on islands off the Massachusetts coast, presumably destroyed by storms or by disease induced by exposure. About 200 Bonaparte's Gulls were recorded the first week of July in Essex County, Mass.

Laughing Gulls have been destroying the eggs and young of other birds, and catching insects in the air.

The southward movement of shore birds is well under way; among those reported the first week of July in Massachusetts were Least and Semipalmated Sandpipers, a Sanderling, Knots, Dowitchers, Yellowlegs and Hudsonian Curlews. At the same time most of these species were reported on islands off the coast of Virginia, also Willets, which, however, may have bred in that region. At that time no northward movement of Little Blue Herons or Egrets was noted on the Virginia coast; nevertheless should a hot wave occur in the south with prevailing southerly winds between now and August 1, such a movement may be looked for here. Great Blue Herons have been reported on the Massachusetts coast every month in the year, and one has been recorded this month in Virginia. Green Herons seem to have been later than usual this year in Massachusetts, their numbers seemed less than usual in May, but they increased in June.

In the south some of the warblers are on their way toward the Gulf of Mexico. In New England the rains seem to have delayed or prolonged the breeding period in many cases; there is much late bird song and few warblers have begun wandering through the woods.

Random Notes

If you see a robin with a snow-white band 3/4 inches wide on the lower (outer) border of each wing, please report.

Four Brown Pelicans were recorded on the coast of Essex County, Mass., June 7. Our last prior record was from Rhode Island in 1921. Has anyone else seen a Brown Pelican in New England in recent years?

Mr. John A. Farley, of this Division, spent three weeks in June and early July in Hampden, Hampshire, Franklin and Worcester Counties, Mass. He was handicapped by excessive rainfall, but found the Winter Wren breeding much farther south in Worcester County than previously recorded and secured a Goshawk in fine juvenal plumage, taken alive from the nest in Petersham, probably the first (possibly the second) breeding record of the Goshawk for this state. He also found breeding Olive-backed Thrushes farther east in Franklin County than heretofore. The Blackpoll Warbler was reported June 26 in northern Worcester County, Mass., and in Hampshire County. Eight Cerulean Warblers were recorded in Dutchess County, N.Y., in May and June. Two nests were found. A Red Crossbill was reported in Essex County, Mass., early in July.

A woman remarked to one of our observers that she had noticed that Mr. Faxon was continually reading books about the Auk. She could not imagine why so much should be written in regard to an extinct bird, or why he should care to read about it all the time! Members of the A.O.U., people who knew Walter Faxon, and subscribers to "The Auk" will all appreciate this; among them Ye Editor of Ye Olde Bardd

BIRD BANDING

Some fledglings are taken now in traps in the localities where they were banded. In time such records will tell us how long the young birds remain near the nesting place before they migrate. In our list of species banded by members of the N.E.B.B.A. the Olive-backed Thrush was omitted. Miss Bertha L. Brown, of Bangor, Maine, has trapped and banded this species. Doubtless many other species would have been banded had the supply of bands been adequate.

A Purple Grackle banded July 29, 1921, was retaken at the same place May 10, 1922, in the same trap, by Mr. R. J. Middleton, Jefferson, Pa. Mr. Laurence B. Fletcher reports that between May 1 and May 12 he trapped and banded at Cohasset, Mass., several Song and Chipping Sparrows. These birds were retaken several times daily up to May 12, when apparently they disappeared. On July 9 both Chipping and Song Sparrows reappeared in the traps. Where were these birds from May 12 to July 9? Did they merely cease to come to the traps because of more tempting food elsewhere, or did they go to some other place in the meantime, possibly farther north, to breed? Bird banding may yet answer these questions. Mrs. George E. Burbank, of Sandwich, Mass., says a boy reports five banded swallows sitting on a telegraph wire. Perhaps we shall yet learn who banded these swallows. Watch for banded birds. Tree Swallows have already begun moving to the coast. Soon some of the migrating birds that were banded last spring will come back on their southward migration and may be retaken in traps.

Are there any members of the N.E.B.B.A., residing near Boston who have half a day now and then which they are willing to give in helping to write the bird banding records on cards? If so, will they please telephone or write this office?

What We Want

Some who hope that we will continue to send them these notes inquire what kind of information we desire in return. We wish (1) notes on birds seen from day to day, giving numbers and dates as far as possible, underlining rare or accidental species. Such reports may be arranged for convenience as follows:

| | June | July | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------|-------|-----------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 29-30 | 1--2--3--4--5--6--7--8--9--10--11 | | | | | | | | | |
| Kingfisher | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | 2 | | | |
| Barn swallow | | | | | 3 | 2 | | | 6 | | |
| Oriole | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 |

(2) Note when each species arrives and departs; (3) dates between which the species is most common in your locality; (4) notes on time required for nest building, incubation, time young are fed, both in nest and after they leave it, all with dates; (5) notes on molts and seasonal plumage changes; (6) notes and observations on habits and behavior of individual birds; (7) notes on the food of any species; (8) notes on means of attracting or protecting birds. Anything that interests you regarding a bird will be welcome. Keep your eye on the individual bird, see what it does in the world. The making of lists is the mere beginning of the study.

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COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
Department of Agriculture
136 State House, Boston.

Dr. Arthur W. Gilbert, Commissioner.

E. H. Forbush,
Director,
Division of Ornithology.

September 15, 1922.

NOTES FOR OBSERVERS

The autumnal migration will soon reach its height. The present warm wave may delay it a little, but frosts and storms in the north will accelerate it again. Already the greater part of the shore-bird flight has passed, and the waterfowl are moving down from the Arctic tundra. Reports from northern Ontario indicate an abundance of Black Ducks there. They seem to have bred well over a large part of the north. Mergansers seem less numerous than last year.

The great autumnal flights of Hawks have begun, and owing to a scarcity of rabbits and mice (which may be local or general) great Owls are moving through the northern forests. Frosts in the Maine woods have been followed by an exodus of numerous migrating warblers. Warblers have been heard almost nightly passing over southern New England since the latter part of August. Multitudes of Sparrows are moving. There are many localities where small land birds are rare and others where they are abundant.

The great flight of shore birds, the latter part of August, included from hundreds to "thousands" (?) of Golden Plovers, many of which were seen on Nantucket and some on Marthas Vineyard and elsewhere on the Massachusetts coast. Some were shot by gunners. This is the greatest flight of the species that has appeared on our coast for many years. Along the shore of Cape Cod near the Canal, the flight of Golden and Black-breasted Plovers continued day and night. Many Willets and Hudsonian Curlews appeared, and Ruddy Turnstones were abundant. The early flight of the Great Blue Herons came in smaller numbers than in recent years. Rails were scarce when the shooting season opened, due doubtless to floods that destroyed their eggs or young. Mourning Doves are more abundant locally than for many years; 40 were reported from one place in Middlesex County, Mass., and 100 from a farm on Cape Cod.

The late flights of Nighthawks passed early in September, but Whip-poor-wills remained and a few are here yet. A great movement of Flycatchers took place the latter part of August. A flock of about 50 Kingbirds was seen, however, in Plymouth County, Mass., September 4, and stragglers

later. A few Rusty Blackbirds have been reported in Massachusetts; more in Maine. Crossbills are still abundant in northern New England, and appear to be rare in Massachusetts except in the Berkshires. Pine Siskins have appeared in numbers in the woods of northern Ontario "evidently coming from the south". Crossbills recently arrived there also.

There is a great crop of fruit and seeds in the northern woods, which may be sufficient to hold the northern winter birds there all winter; but this condition probably is not universal.

August 29 the following species were seen in South Carolina: Brown Creeper, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Northern Water-Thrush, Blackburnian and Myrtle Warblers. August 30 an Upland Plover and a Magnolia Warbler were reported from northern Texas. Winter Wrens have bred well in the north, and some are already moving southward.

RANDOM NOTES

Many birds, not dismayed by the storms and floods of the season and perhaps encouraged by an abundant food supply, have persevered in raising young, and there are many late broods. We have record of three successful broods of the Cedar Waxwing and four of the Song Sparrow. The last young in both cases are still in the nest. Had the parent birds been banded the record would have been complete.

Ruffed Grouse are very plentiful in Algonquin Provincial Park, Ontario. A covey were feeding at the door of a cottage there, when one bird went into the kitchen and remained there among the people for fully five minutes, then walked out and joined its companions which had been feeding about ten feet away. These were wild birds, hatched in the wildest of wild woods, but all birds are protected in the Park and there is no shooting.

About August 20 a large frog was seen swallowing a Redstart. The bird was going down head-first and was dead when taken from the frog. How did that frog get that bird? They sometimes catch fledglings but this bird was fullgrown.

An Arkansas Kingbird (?) has been reported from Essex County, Mass., recently.

BIRD BANDING

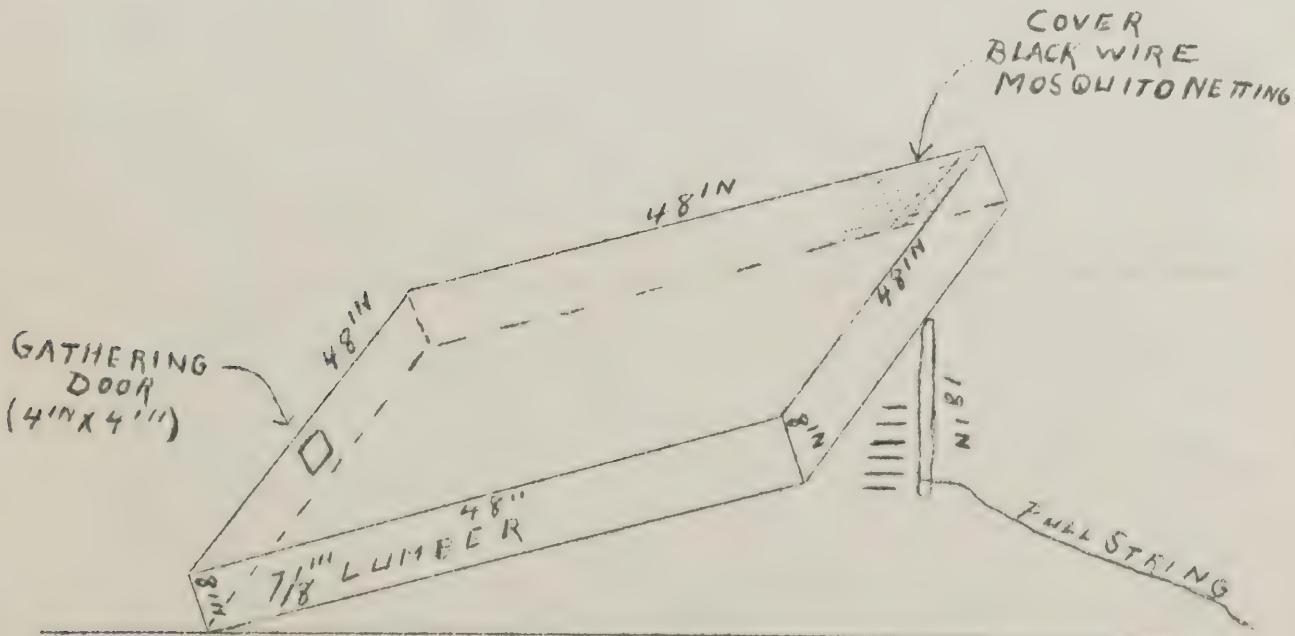
NOTICE:

The Recording Secretary is making a list of birds banded during the past year for a preliminary report. Please send in at once a record of all birds banded since the Association was organized, unless you already have made such reports, and if so please bring your report up to date. If you have banded even one bird and have not reported it to this office, please send record immediately. Address: Mrs. Alice B. Harrington, Recording Secretary, 136 State House, Boston.

Night Heron No. 201908, banded June 17 at West Barnstable by Fletcher, Mackaye and Floyd, was picked up dead at Beach Bluffs (between Swampscott and Marblehead) Sept. 4, by E. M. Collins.

Mr. Conover Fitch, of Brookline, Mass., having just received both Federal and State permits to trap and band birds, at once built a pull-string trap, from specifications sent from Washington, which cost him \$1.50, and took him just three hours to make. After painting the trap green he placed it in his front yard in the grass, and in less than twenty minutes he caught two Bronzed Grackles and one Blue Jay. The bait he used was cracked corn, white bread crumbs and sunflower seeds. He says: "No trouble is anticipated in catching birds readily each day, and I am impatiently awaiting a supply of bands."

This is his trap:



EDWARD HOWE FORBUSH?

Director.

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COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
Department of Agriculture
136 State House, Boston
Dr. Arthur W. Gilbert, CommissionerDivision of Ornithology
E. H. Forbush, Director

October 16, 1922.

NOTES FOR OBSERVERS

The summer weather and southerly winds of the last days of September seemed to delay migration a little, but about October 1 countless White-throated Sparrows began to appear in Massachusetts from the Berkshire Hills east to Middlesex County, and many Juncos invaded Berkshire. October 3 tremendous flocks of crows were seen going south. On the 4th a considerable flight of warblers and sparrows was seen within the limits of Boston. A report from eastern Maine records great flights of land birds passing through that region during the pleasant weather beginning October 2. Then during inclement weather for a few days a scarcity of birds prevailed. They seemed to be fleeing southward on the 5th before the electric storms which threatened on the 6th and finally reached Massachusetts on the 7th and 8th bringing terrific downpours of rain over a large region. With the beginning of the rain on the afternoon of the 7th, large numbers of land birds appeared suddenly in many Massachusetts localities and during the deluge of the 8th this abundance of land birds continued. This great flight and landing of birds was not seen apparently by many people on account of heavy rains, but some observers report it.

Hundreds of Cedar Waxwings came, stripping the berries from the red cedars. There were Rusty Blackbirds, Myrtle, Parula and Blackpoll Warblers, Kinglets, Brown Creepers, White-throated Sparrows, White-crowned and Swamp Sparrows, Purple Finches, Juncos, Song Sparrows and many more. Hundreds of Tree Swallows passed south the same day, and many Red-winged Blackbirds. For several days thereafter birds were comparatively numerous in many places where before they had been scarce. On the other hand, they disappeared entirely from some localities where they had been abundant. An observer writes "It was the greatest number of birds I ever imagined at one time". However, at 4 P.M. on the 8th the birds had disappeared "in toto" from that locality.

Since September 25, when ice an inch thick was reported in Maine, there has been a movement of Red-breasted Nuthatches on the Maine seaboard. Most of the earlier warblers have gone, but Myrtles, Pines, Magnolias and Yellow Palms have been numerous, particularly Myrtles, which reached Massachusetts in increasing numbers the beginning of last week. The great migration of sparrows is passing, among them Lincoln's Sparrows, and near the coast Acadian Sharp-tailed Sparrows, Goldfinches and Purple Finches now seem to be working southward from northern New England. Pine Siskins increase. Two immense flocks are reported near Bangor. "The sky was black with them", and the buzzing noise they made was mistaken for the sound of an automobile, or some kind of harvesting machinery. Flocks of Pine Siskins and a few Cross-

bills are observed in Massachusetts. A small flight of Crossbills appeared at Block Island October 6. Pipits have been heard from all along the New England seaboard. An immense movement of Golden-crowned Kinglets has passed through this region from Maine to Pennsylvania. Probably many are now farther south, and many still remain in New England. Ruby-crowns are not reported in unusual numbers. Many Winter Wrens are reported. Many Blue-headed Vireos and a few Migrant Shrikes have been passing.

On the night of the 13th a cold wave with the thermometer dropping to 20 or lower in parts of southern New England sent along another great flight of birds. This flight must have stripped a large part of the north country.

Among the water birds Pied-billed Grebes have been common since the middle of September, and a few Horned Grebes were seen before October came in. The Razor-billed Auk and the Kittiwake have been recorded in Massachusetts waters. Gannets have increased here. A great migration of Double-crested Cormorants has passed and Bonaparte's Gulls have been locally very common. Few Ring-billed Gulls reported. The reports of Canada Geese increase, the largest number reported is 200 on Cape Cod. Black Ducks, Teal, Wood Ducks, Baldpates, Pintails, the three Scoters and Red-breasted Mergansers are the ducks generally noted, but the main fall flight may be expected soon.

Great Blue Herons have been reported generally and a few Golden Plovers have been seen within a week. Greater Yellowlegs are passing still. First Wilson's Snipe reported from Block Island October 5. There on the 10th in dense fog with heavy showers "it seemed as though it rained snipe". They were in most unusual places such as roads and barnyards.

An inquiry regarding the number of Golden Plovers killed during the flight on Nantucket brought the following response: "The largest bag brought in by any one party (two men) as far as I can learn was 50". "They told me they could have shot more, but the truth is they were shooting near a barn, over decoys, and every time they fired a cow or two would kick over the men milking and the pails also". It seems that the gunners stopped shooting "by request".

There is a movement of Arctic Horned Owls in Ontario and an influx of Woodpeckers in Maine; look out for Arctic Three-toed Woodpeckers this winter. One is reported now from western New York.

Bird Banding

All members of the Bird Banding Association are cordially invited to call at Room 136, State House, whenever they come to Boston, and examine the records of the bird banding done by members of the Association.

The officers of the Association highly appreciate the voluntary assistance of Mrs. M. M. Kaan, secretary of the Brookline Bird Club, who, with a few other members of the club, has devoted considerable time to the records of the Association.

EDWARD HOWE FORBUSH,
Director.

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COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
Department of Agriculture
136 State House, Boston.

Dr. Arthur W. Gilbert, Commissioner.

Division of Ornithology
E. H. Forbush, Director

November 15, 1922.

NOTES FOR OBSERVERS

In the last days of October a flight of Snow Buntings and another of Snowy Owls was heard from in the Maritime Provinces, and a few reached southern New England where a number of both species have been recorded since. The first Snowy Owl was reported from Block Island on the 30th of October. Repcrts of Goshawks, Rough-legged Hawks, Horned Owls and Arctic Owls, taken with the movement of Snowy Owls, seem to indicate some southward movement of boreal Raptiores. The scarcity of mice and rabbits in the north may be more extensive than earlier reports indicated. Small boreal land birds such as Tree Sparrows, Pipits, Horned Larks, Siskins and Pine Grosbeaks have been moving in numbers, also Goldfinches, Purple Finches and Fox Sparrows. Pine Grosbeaks have been reported in some abundance in Nova Scotia, but in much fewer numbers in southern New England.

Apparently in the great flight of late October vast numbers of birds were blown offshore, as they were far more numerous on islands off the coast than in the interior. The observer on Block Island recalls no such number of land birds at any time as were seen there in the last week of October. There were more Hermit Thrushes than the observer had seen in all her years put together; and countless thousands of Robins were seen crossing the point by the light-house and going out to sea. There were Horned Larks, Redpolls, Blue-birds, also two Olive-sided Flycatchers. On Marthas Vineyard and the outer arm of Cape Cod there were myriads of Juncos and other small birds, which appeared later along the inner coast line. There were quantities of Hermit Thrushes, some of which on Marthas Vineyard were apparently so exhausted by protracted flights at sea that they died.

During the first week of November there was a great flight of northern sea birds, including Loons, Kittiwakes, Black-backed Gulls, many Eider Ducks and White-winged and Surf Scoters. Red-breasted Mergansers in numbers have appeared in northern Massachusetts waters. There are many Bonaparte's Gulls and some Ring-bills, while some Terns are still south of Cape Cod. Scoters, Eiders, Brants and Canada Geese have appeared with few if any young. Gunners are wondering what happened to them in the north. The first flight of Geese has gone south, and was disappointing. The

Notes for Observers -2-
Nov. 15, 1922.

main flight is not yet. Pintails are less rare than usual and there are many Baldpates and an increased number of Red-heads and Canvasbacks in southeastern Massachusetts.

Random Notes

The great flight of Kinglets has gone south, but there are still many Golden-crowns in New England, and a few Ruby-crowns have been reported recently. Tree Sparrows have not been reported in very large numbers in any part of southern New England, except in Worcester County, Mass., where large flocks were seen as early as Oct. 18.

Ruffed Grouse are reported as generally abundant, but in some localities in Worcester County, Mass., where they were numerous last year, they are now very scarce. A few large flocks of Red-winged Blackbirds were seen during the past week in Massachusetts. Shrikes have been moving through New England since the latter part of October. During the last two weeks of the month many Buffleheads and Red-throated Loons appeared. Winter Wrens still continue to be heard from.

It is remarkable how large flights of birds go through New England almost unreported. No one yet has recorded the great November flight of Great Blue Herons, although stragglers are noted from Maine to Virginia. November 8 an immense migration of ducks was seen in Worcester County, Mass. The flight began rather late in the afternoon and continued far into the night. One who saw it asserts that it was "the greatest movement ever". The birds were too far away to identify the species. No one elsewhere has recorded this flight. A thousand Baldpates were reported recently from a pond on Marthas Vineyard. We saw at least 500 in one pond there, and hundreds in other ponds, - yet no one has reported any considerable movement of these birds anywhere in New England.

An observer on the coast of Essex County reports 15,000 Grackles in several great flocks flying south to southwest and occupying about 15 minutes in passing, soon after 6.15 A.M. on Oct. 30. On Nov. 6 for 40 minutes, between 3.45 and 4.35 P.M., he saw a stream of these birds passing northward. He climbed into a tower and watched the flight. The stream passed without interruption for 40 minutes by the watch. He estimated the number at 75,000 and believes that this is a very conservative estimate, and that there were many more. It was nearly dark when the last birds passed. They were followed with glasses until beyond the range of vision. After that another flock of surely 800 went over. During the flight a few starlings were observed, perhaps 100, but no Cowbirds or other species of blackbirds. No one else reported this flight. But from the 1st to the 13th large flocks of Grackles were reported in various towns in Essex and Middlesex Counties. These birds may still be in those counties. An immense flight of Crows was seen Oct. 31 going south in Middlesex County, Mass., so high that no cawing

was heard. The observer says: "They must have been seen by other observers". No one else, however, reports them. Unusual numbers of Bald Eagles and Pileated Woodpeckers are reported. This indicates probably a southward movement. A migration of gray squirrels is recorded in western Massachusetts.

The so-called early movement of northern birds in our region has been interpreted by seers here as a sign of a hard winter. Other wiseacres farther north predict a mild winter. Take your choice!

An observer reports a very active male Downy Woodpecker turning under and over branches. All at once the little bird laid the side of its head against a knot in a pear tree and apparently listened. It remained motionless for some time, then moved its head slightly and looked into the hole with one eye, drew its head back and listened again, then turned its bill towards the knothole, hammered a little and drew out something with which it flew away.

A Black-throated Green Warbler on Long Island Nov. 10, and a Catbird Nov. 12.

Occasionally a correspondent asks us if crows can be taught to speak English. We have tried to answer this question in an article published in American Forestry for October.

Three crows were seen in a seckel pear tree very busy about something. In a few minutes they flew away, each one carrying in its bill by the stem a pear picked from the tree.

Look out for white hawks and black ones. The white hawks may be albinos or Snowy Owls, probably not Gyrfalcons. The black ones are black Rough-legs. Both white and black hawks have been reported.

Bird Banding Notes

The New England Bird Banding Association secured 142 candidates for membership in the American Ornithologists' Union, who were all elected at the meeting last month in Chicago. This is the largest number of candidates from ** Mr. J. Howard Edwards, a member of the Association, while on a duck shooting trip secured 9 banded ducks, and a member of the Essex County Ornithological Club also obtained one. The bands have been sent to Washington and the result may be published later in this bulletin.

A Bronzed Grackle, banded Sept. 11 by Mr. Charles B. Flcyd at Auburndale was found wounded by Mr. M. J. May at Elizabeth, N.J. Nov. 7. Later it recovered and flew away with others of its kind.

Mr. Charles J. Ives has observed White-throated Sparrows in the Arnold Arboretum at Boston with bands on their legs. Probably these birds were banded somewhere by some member of the Association.

On October 22 a young Red-shouldered Hawk, which was taken last June from the nest, was released by Mr. A.A. Cross, of Huntington, Mass., who had placed poultry bands Nos. 40 and 41 on its legs.

Edward Howe Forbush,

Director.

**one source to join the Union in any one year.

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JAN. 1923

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
Department of Agriculture
156 State House, Boston.

Dr. Arthur W. Gilbert, Commissioner.

Division of Ornithology
E. H. Forbush, Director

January 15, 1923.

NOTES FOR OBSERVERS

Snow has fallen 24 times this winter, and there seems to be more in the sky. Life is just one snowstorm after another. From 22 to 52 inches of snow are recorded in various parts of southern New England, but there has been very little on Marthas Vineyard and Nantucket, and much less generally along the coast than in the interior.

The northward movement of Canada Geese reported on January first continued during the first week of the month. Geese were reported "all day in large flocks" on January 5 moving northward in New Jersey and in much smaller numbers January 6 in Massachusetts. There are said to be many now off the Massachusetts coast south of Cape Cod. Northeasterly storms have driven sea fowl and sea ducks down on the coast. The great gale and snowstorm of the 8th distributed dovekies all over the coastal plain of eastern Massachusetts. We have records of fifteen picked up on the snow in Boston. There were many in Lynn harbor, and other reports came in from the Merrimac to Nantucket! Murres (Sp.) have been seen at various points and possibly a few Razor-billed Auks, but no Puffins have been reported yet. During and since the northeast storms Loons and Grebes have been common in Buzzards Bay. During the last three weeks also Cormorants and Purple Sandpipers have been reported from the ledges of the Essex Co. coasts.

The southward movement of Great Gray, Great Horned, Snowy, Richardson's and Acadian Owls seems to have stopped. Most of this flight has not reached southern New England. Rough-legged Hawks are more numerous than during the past two winters. This month Sparrow Hawks appear commonly in the reports from southern New England.

Land birds are scarce. There has been a great southeastward or coastward movement of Juncos, which are numerous in Bristol, Plymouth and Barnstable Counties, Mass., but comparatively rare in the interior. The ever-recurring question is "What has become of the Chickadees?" Yet Chickadees are plentiful in northern Vermont, some parts of Maine and locally

in southern New England. Generally they are scarce even in the woods and orchards, but we have no other evidence of migration. Their movements must be more or less local. During the last 15 days more Goldfinches, Crossbills, Purple Finches and Pine Grosbeaks, and many more Tree Sparrows, have appeared in southern New England apparently from the north. Tree Sparrows and Shrikes seem to be passing south, but no general southward movement is indicated. White-winged Crossbills in large numbers are in Northern Vermont and Northern New York. Siskins are abundant locally in southern New England, and still more abundant in the Delaware Valley in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. Snow Buntings and Horned Larks are fewer and less widely distributed. Here and there are a few Cedar Waxwings, and a very few Evening Grosbeaks. Redpolls are working southward locally into Massachusetts. Fox Sparrows appear to be much fewer than in December. Despite the snow Jays and Crows still remain with us but not many Shrikes appear. Robins are moving erratically in the Middle States. Robins are scattered over New England, and there are a few Catbirds and Winter Wrens in unexpected places. Mockingbirds as usual in winter are reported along the seaboard from Connecticut to Maine.

Random Notes

A Bittern was seen up to January 8 on Cape Cod. It was caught by one toe in a rat trap and was released practically uninjured. A female Pintail was reported January 7 in an open pond in Boston. Ruffed Grouse are generally abundant and are doing some damage locally by eating fruit buds on apple trees. They are said to have caused last winter a damage of \$4000. in New Hampshire. Grouse seem to be scarce in a large region in southern Vermont.

During the past fortnight we have seen newspaper reports of robin song. We wonder if these robins were shrikes or starlings? A flock of Bluebirds remained until January 3 in central Rutland County, Vt. They fed along some fence rows where wild grapes and chokecherries abound. About daybreak on January 11 a Richardson's Owl alighted on a window feeding shelf in Norfolk County, Mass. It peered over the edge of the shelf at some small birds feeding underneath and dived down in an attempt to catch one. It then returned to the shelf and by this time the observer had his face almost against the pane. The owl sat there a moment staring directly at the face within about six inches, then fluttered against an adjoining window a moment, and finally flew toward some tall pines.

Here is some more "newspaper ornithology"! "About two weeks ago the people of Turner, Maine, were astonished to see a large bird pick up a 50-pound calf and fly over a stone wall with it. Since then the bird has been captured by Fred Sanborn and proved to be a Horned Owl over three feet in length." No wonder the people were astonished. This beats the wolf story in our last Items. We shall expect to hear next that an Eagle has carried off a cow.

Reports from our Observers have fallen off considerably this month. Please report, even if birds are scarce. We want to know what species are scarce or missing. Also we want reports of the first indication of northward movements or movements in any direction.

BIRD BANDING

On December 31 the Hon. Herbert Parker of Lancaster, Mass., took two Tree Sparrow returns. These birds were banded by him January 29, 1922, and repeated several times up to March 4, 1922.

Mr. Aaron C. Bagg, of Holyoke, has the seventh return of Tree Sparrows banded at his place last February.

Mrs. Herbert Pratt, of Middleboro, Mass., saw a banded Purple Finch feeding at her station. Someone else must have banded this bird as she has not taken any of this species.

Mrs. Elizabeth L. Burbank, at Sandwich, Mass., banded three Chickadees last March and early in April. On December 5 they appeared again in her traps. This may indicate migration or only a local movement from the woods to the village.

Mr. George H. Priest, of Brockton, Mass., took 50 birds from his traps on January 7 and banded 22 of them - the rest were repeats.

Ladies may now take their bird banding traps along with their knitting, when they go visiting. In spite of the deep snow and bad walking recently, one of our members took her trap in her hand and walked to the house of a friend; - Both ladies set their traps and soon caught and banded two birds each.

Notice

Please give dates of all repeats.

Suggestions for Attracting Birds to Banding Stations During the Winter Season.

By Charles L. Whittle.

These suggestions are made to assist those who, not possessing old, weedy gardens frequented by birds or sparrow-wintering places close to their homes, have difficulty in attracting birds to their feeding and banding station.

In September and October begin planning your banding station. This preferably should be on the south or southwest side of your house and observable from the room you frequent most. Convenience urges that the station be close to the house, a shelf one foot wide and five feet long just outside the window on the lower floor is convenient and satisfactory. Most of the small wintering birds that occur in New England feed freely on such a shelf. An ordinary Canary cage (see figure of the one used by Mrs. Herrick in Circular No. 4, Biological Survey) is very satisfactory in every particular for small birds up to the size of Grosbeaks. This cage (trap) is operated from inside the house, and when a bird is trapped the cage may be brought into the house where you can comfortably band the birds. Very satisfactory results will be had in using the cage by attaching a string to the spring door. Then pass

Notes for Observers -4-

it through the window frame to the ceiling and across the room to a hook where it should be fastened. When a bird is seen in the cage, unhook the string and the door will shut. One bird only should be taken at a time.

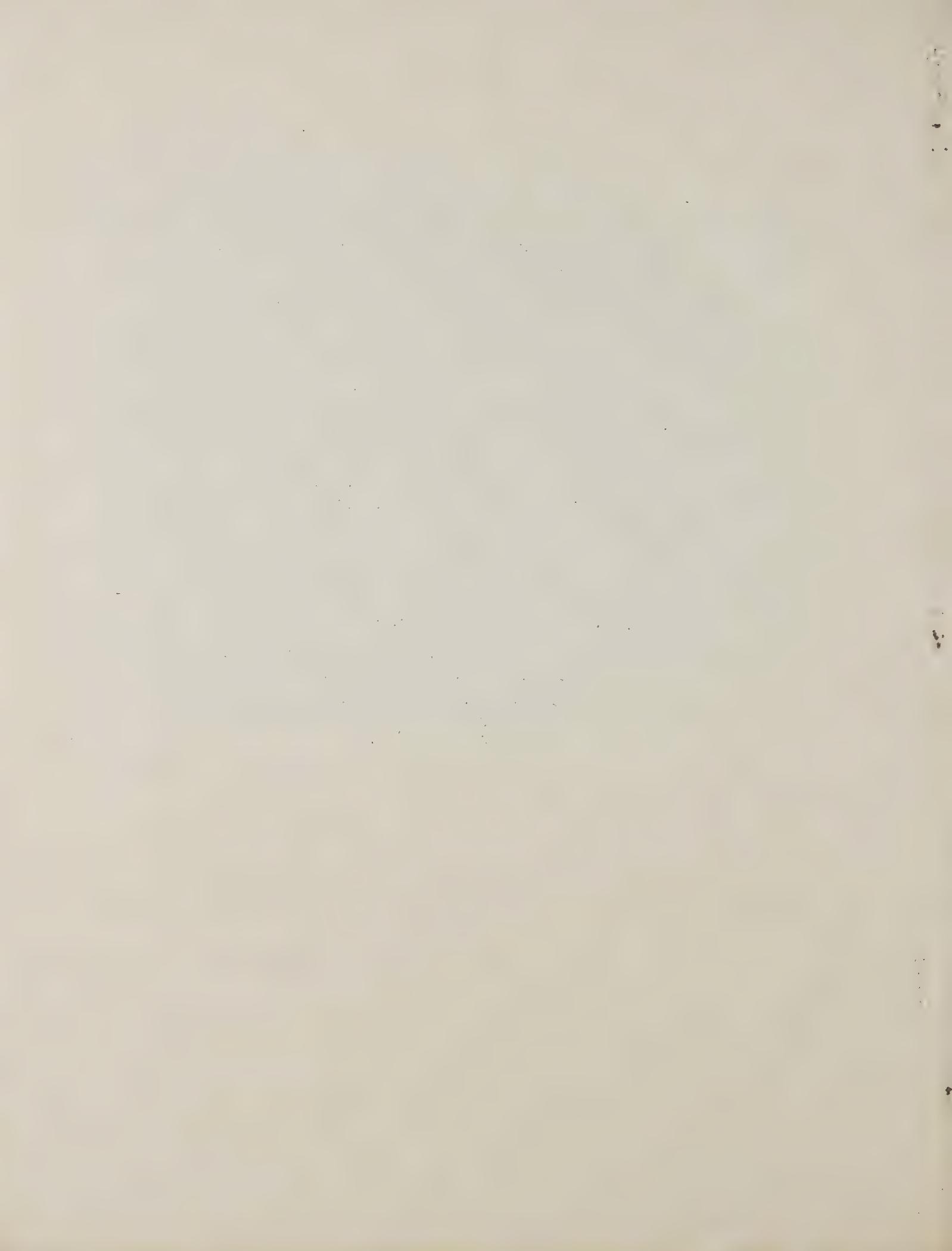
When net banding keep plenty of food on the ground outside the window. Once in a while, even after the birds have begun coming to your shelf, scatter a little food over your yard. Birds flying over may see your birds feeding and join them.

A pull-string trap may be operated on the ground, but first you must get the birds to come to the station. To accomplish this, look over the nearest woods, fields and old gardens about your house, even those four hundred to five hundred feet away, for groups of winter birds which are finding food in some favorite place, in some patch of pigweed or other jungle of late seeding plants, in a thicket along a brook, or in a swamp. Having found the birds feeding, see that plenty of food is kept there till the natural supply is nearly exhausted or snow covers the ground too deep for birds to secure seeds. At such times birds can be quickly led to your station by placing food on the ground close to the weedy patch and day after day scattering seeds nearer and nearer the station. This method may be employed before the snow flies by placing a line of food on cleared spots or on flat stones, or on a wall extending across a wood, a swamp, or tangled undergrowth. When birds find the seeds, gradually draw them to your feeding shelf as in the first instance.

Feed Blue Jays and Woodpeckers on suet on a separate shelf well removed from your other one. They are readily baited and enticed by tying suet to successive trees nearer and nearer your station. Juncos and Song Sparrows eat suet at times.

Birds need assorted sand during the time the ground is snow-covered, and on warm days a shallow basin of water (such as the saucer to a flower pot) will be much appreciated.

Edward Howe Forbush,
Director.



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MARCH - 1923

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
Department of Agriculture

Dr. Arthur W. Gilbert, Commissioner.

Division of Ornithology
E. H. Forbush, Director.

March 15, 1923.

NOTES FOR OBSERVERS

NOTICE:-- Our mailing list is now so large and our allowance for postage so small that there will be no more Notes issued on the 15th of each month. The Items will appear on the first of the month as usual.

From the Carolinas northward to the gateway of New England birds are moving. Water-fowl, Blackbirds, Purple Finches, Sparrows, Tree Swallows, Myrtle Warblers, Robins and Bluebirds- all the early migrants are coming. During the thaw of the first week in March Robins and Bluebirds appeared from eastern Massachusetts and Connecticut to western New York and Ontario. Increased numbers of Fox Sparrows were reported in southwestern Connecticut and a few Grackles and Rusty Blackbirds. The great snowstorm with following cold that occurred on the 6th and 7th checked this movement.

Late in February there was quite a movement of Holboell's Grebes, and a number were picked up about March 1 in various places in southern New England. The ice embargo during the freezing weather of February is said to have been responsible for many dead Grebes, Scoters and Loons along the coast.

Some Ring-billed Gulls apparently wintered in Maine. Mergansers which began to move in February are now appearing in numbers along the coast and in the interior. Red-breasted Mergansers began moving along the coast at about the same time. A few flocks of Geese have been noted in the interior. Killdeers which wintered in Connecticut during the past two years were not reported there this year until late February and early March.

Evidently there has been a considerable flight of Horned Owls in Maine, but we have no record of it in southern New England. A Maine taxidermist reports the following approximate number of owls which were brought in or sent to him: Snowy Owls, 20; Great Horned, 25; Barred, 45; Richardson's, 30; Acadian, 22; miscellaneous, 7. A New Hampshire taxidermist reports 36 Richardson's Owls taken in Massachusetts and New Hampshire. During the past two weeks many owls have been hooting in the forests of northern Ontario. This apparently indicates a northward movement. The usual winter Hawks are noted, and evidently the number of Red-shouldered Hawks is increasing in Connecticut.

Great damage to orchards by Ruffed Grouse has been reported from Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Maine. Apparently the injury will aggregate thousands of

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dollars. The New Hampshire authorities are said to have reimbursed farmers to the extent of \$5,000. Fruit growers are much exercised and attempts have been made to enact legislation allowing them to shoot the birds. Nothing new in this. Many years ago when Grouse were far more abundant, some Massachusetts towns offered bounties of 25 cents each on their heads. Injury will decrease with the inevitable decrease of the birds. a year ago

Mourning Doves which were abundant locally on Cape Cod" disappeared in February this winter, and few have been reported since. A Phoebe was reported from Plymouth County, Mass., on February 14. This is our earliest record from that county. Starlings and English Sparrows have begun nesting. The first Canada Jay reported this winter from Massachusetts has been coming recently to a feeding station in northwestern Worcester County. The one that wintered near Boston last year has not been seen this winter. Cowbirds which were seen in large numbers on Cape Cod early in the winter mostly disappeared, but they have been reported regularly since in very large numbers in Plymouth County, Mass., and in Connecticut. No pronounced movement of Red-winged Blackbirds in New England has been recorded. During the thaw flocks of Redpolls were observed daily in Maine moving northward. Greater Redpolls have been reported for the first time this winter near the Connecticut Valley in Massachusetts.

In the winter of 1921-22 Cedar Waxwings were rare indeed in New England, and apparently there was no early spring movement from the south. During the past winter Cedar Waxwings have been seen in many parts of New England, New York and Ontario in small flocks, and the number now seems to be increasing. Shrikes apparently have increased in numbers in February and now seem to be moving slowly northward. Chickadees are numerous in many localities, scarce in others. Numbers of Brown-capped Chickadees have been reported in northern New England within a month. At least three Catbirds have come through the winter safely in southern New England.

The Bluebirds which were wintering in central Vermont, and disappeared in February, returned again during the thaw in early March, and amused themselves in catching flies which came out of a house or stable.

For several years we have had reports of Fish Crows in winter from the western end of Long Island to Cape Cod. These we have not mentioned, but we are now satisfied that Fish Crows are seen occasionally in winter at least as far east as New London, Conn.

Along the coast of southern New England and in the river valleys where floods have cleared away the snow, early migrants may now be looked for. Fox Sparrows and other early Sparrows, Blackbirds and Bluebirds await a partial clearance of the snow. Some boreal birds are leaving us. Juncos are moving, but from all signs the coming of spring in northern New England may be long delayed.

Random Notes

Some young men near Newburyport, Mass., saw a Snowy Owl on the ground in an open field with several crows attacking it. The Owl appeared to pay no attention to the crows. The observers approached the owl, when it flew to a knoll some distance away. They followed the bird from knoll to knoll and on each of these knolls there was a feeding place with a collection of ducks' feet, bones, feathers, wings and fur. Evidently the owl was making a good living.

During the ice embargo about Plymouth, Mass., flocks of gulls were seen searching back yards in quest of garbage and other food. One of the residents was startled one morning when stepping to the door of her home, a large flock of gulls were seen occupying the premises.

There was much bird song during the thaw. We heard reports of bird songs during February, but they increased considerably in early March. Robins and Purple Finches in some cases gave full songs. A Song Sparrow was heard singing with the thermometer 4 below zero.

Starlings have been reported in various parts of the Provinces. Two hundred Geese have been wintering at the southern end of Lake Huron, and feeding in corn fields or wheat fields.

People interested in statistics may digest this: A Maine man has estimated that there are now in the State of Maine 2,767,453,262½ cords of snow.

A few Lapland Longspurs were reported up to February, not since.

An observer has been watching the grouse to see how they hit the snow when they dive into it. He finds that where they strike hard snow, too hard to penetrate, they leave the impression of their breasts, and he has decided that they do not strike head first.

Two Barn Owls have been reported as taken in Ontario this winter.

Apparently a Duck Hawk has remained throughout the winter in and around Boston, and during the first week in March Duck Hawks were reported from western Massachusetts.

An observer on Cape Cod found 15 Goldfinches dead in his woodpile after the storm of the 7th.

The Toronto Globe says: "Mr. Forbush is looking for trouble when he says that the severity of the present winter will discourage robins that stayed in the North. 'They will never try to winter here again' he declares." Someone has blundered. We never said it.

A man who has passed a number of years in Greenland has been residing in York County, Maine. He declares that he never suffered so much from the cold, and intends to return to Greenland next winter, where he can take a little comfort.

Bird Banding

Good News! - A new bird banding station has been established at the Alabama Polytechnic Institute, College of Agriculture, Auburn, Alabama, where Professor J. M. Robinson has instituted a course in Economic Ornithology. The twelve men registered for the course are banding, and all the members of a graduate class have banding permits. Each student in the course is expected to band at least 50 birds. Bird banding as a recognized part of the college course makes the station permanent. The last few days of February and the first four of March 99 Pine Siskins were banded, as well as Song Sparrows, Brown Thrashers and many Cowbirds. The Siskins went into the traps for hickory nut kernels.

Mrs. George E. Burbank, of Sandwich, Mass., used ground squash seeds to attract a Hermit Thrush into her trap recently, and was successful in banding the bird.

Rev. George E. Allen, of Plainfield, Mass., must have the New England record for banding Blue Jays, - he has banded 55 in the last six weeks, and new ones are still coming. Tell us how you get them, Mr. Allen.

A recent letter from Mr. Frederick T. Lincoln, of the Biological Survey at Washington, says: "The work is surely booming. Over 12,000 birds have been banded since July 1, 1922, and the migration is still to come."

We are swamped with notes from enthusiastic bird banders and have little room for their communications. These notes show local winter movements of birds. Birds banded are taken soon afterwards by other banders from one to ten or twelve miles distant.

Description of
The New England Collapsible Pull-string Trap.

This is a new form of Pull-string trap, of which one has been made and tested sufficiently to prove its value in trapping Juncos, etc. The size is 34" x 34" x 7"; a top and four sides, no bottom, rectangular in shape and made of galvanized cellar window wire, with 3/8" openings. The trap is made in five pieces each reinforced along the edges with 1/8" soft steel spring-wire. The sides are hinged to the top, two folding on one side of it and two on the other, when not in use.

When set up for use three sides are placed vertically and laced together with string or wire, the fourth side being left as a door, which is held open by the usual stick with attached string running to operator. A strong rubber band running from middle of the door to the top of the trap is required to close the door. There should be a 4" x 4" door at a rear corner of the trap to be used in connection with gathering cage. The cost of the trap, exclusive of labor, is about \$1.60. Any tinsmith can make it, and most anyone can do the same at home. The advantages over the common pull-string trap are: (1) light weight, about 6 lbs.; (2) easy transportability; (3) small space occupied when collapsed; (4) illumination inside as great as outside; (5) no possibility of injuring birds even in the hands of inexperienced operators.

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Feb. 1925

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
Department of Agriculture
136 State House, Boston

Dr. Arthur W. Gilbert, Commissioner.

Division of Ornithology
E. H. Forbush, Director

February 15, 1925.

NOTES FOR OBSERVERS

Great northeasterly storms have continued to drive sea birds down on the New England coast. Brunnich's Murres, Black Guillemots, Razor-billed Auks and Dovekies have been more common coastwise than usual. Horned Grebes have been common, but Holboell's Grebes and Loons seem to have been much less so. Several Iceland Gulls and Glaucous Gulls have been noted recently on the Massachusetts coast, and there are three reports of Kumlien's Gull. In the southern Atlantic states some of the wild fowl have begun their northward migration, but no such movement has been reported here. Reports of Barrow's Golden-eyes have been received from Essex County, Mass., in numbers varying from one to ten, probably all members of the same company.

Evidently there is considerable movement among land birds. In many places birds common earlier this winter have disappeared; in others where birds were scarce they have come in recently. There seems to have been more or less movement toward the coast, but most of the increase in numbers of birds reported may be due to the fact that many birds from the woods and fields have been driven to feeding stations, owing to exhaustion of winter fruit or seeds or the depth of snow covering the weed tops.

One of the most remarkable features of the winter has been the unusual number in New England of such birds as Catbirds, Robins, Hermit Thrushes, White-throated Sparrows, Fox Sparrows, Meadowlarks and Red-winged Blackbirds. The number of Purple Finches apparently has increased in southern New England and they are still numerous in many parts of northern New England. About 400 were reported recently from an elevation of about 2300 feet in the White Mountains of New Hampshire. There has been some scarcity of woodpeckers in Massachusetts throughout this winter. There are many large tracts of dead spruce and fir in the forests of northern Maine where woodpeckers are so plentiful that an observer writes, "On fine mornings there is a continual tattoo". Thus far this winter no Bohemian Waxwings have been reported, very few Pine Grosbeaks, almost no Evening Grosbeaks, few Shrikes, very few Grackles and no Rusty Blackbirds. Practically no Brown-capped Chickadees have been reported in southern New England but recently there are several reports from northern New England.

There is little to indicate an evident southward movement of Canada Jays such as took place last winter, but a few have been reported near the Maine Coast and one recently in southern New Hampshire. A Cardinal Grosbeak near Boston is still a prominent figure in the neighborhood. We have yet to see any indication of a northward movement of birds in southern New England, nevertheless it is about time for some of the boreal species to be moving. In Maryland Bluebirds are reported where none have been seen all winter, and if the latter part of February should be mild there probably will be some movement of spring birds in New England. Some suffering and death among the winter birds has been reported. We have seen several dead birds.

Adverse Criticism

In the current Auk (Jan. 1923) our friend ye editor, in his capacity of reviewer, takes occasion to criticize our work rather severely. Appreciating as we do his erudition and his high position as President of the American Ornithologists' Union, we have been accustomed to accept his criticisms as "gospel", receiving them almost in the spirit of the boy who remarked with the force of conviction: "If mother says it's so, it's so if it ain't so!" Nevertheless, when a man is flayed and his hide nailed up on the barn for all to see, he is likely to be for a time a little sensitive; but we would not have thought of replying to these strictures except for the great indignation expressed by some of our good friends. In the past we have been one of the fortunate ones, as ye aforesaid editor has been rather commendatory of our efforts than otherwise. Therefore we have little reason to complain now as one cannot always expect to please. Also, the task of the critic is an ungrateful one and one which we do not envy. If he does his duty he must "stir up the animals" more or less. Nevertheless, we believe that in this case his criticism would be less harsh were he fully informed regarding the circumstances under which our work is done.

To begin with, Bulletin No. 8 (Some under water activities of certain water fowl) which he criticizes was merely a preliminary study. Therefore we hope that the criticism may be of value in guiding our erring steps in some future publication on the subject. In some respects we should desire our critic to go even a little further. He says: "The unfortunate part of such compilations is that all evidence is given the same weight while unquestionably some observers are more reliable than others and the testimony of some is valueless." Now if he will only point out to us the evidence in our Bulletin that is valueless, we shall be under lasting obligations. To secure the evidence we sent questionnaires to the Fellows, Members and male Associates of the American Ornithologists' Union, including

most of the museum ornithologists and in fact the chief ornithologists of the country, and the evidence that we published was in nearly every case from people included in the membership of the Union or from those whom some of the members had recommended as trustworthy. There may be some in the membership of the Union whose testimony is valueless, but if so, we hope to have their names given that we may in the future omit them from our list.

Ye editor says again: "The impossibility of separating the data on any such basis is as obviously impossible, so we are forced to read the evidence and draw our own conclusions." Exactly. We published it for that purpose. Of what use is a Bulletin if people will not read it?

Leaving Bulletin No. 8 we come to the criticisms of the Annual Report of the Division of Ornithology for 1921. Our friendly critic is right when he says that the investigation in regard to the Wood Duck was carried out in the same way as that on the under-water activities of water fowl. We admit that the questions regarding this bird were included in the same questionnaire and sent to the same people. He says: "If Mr. Forbush had selected the personal observations of men of scientific training who knew at the time of observation the importance of the problem and eliminated everything else the result would to our mind have been of more importance." Where can one find such men if not among the membership of the A.O.U.; and if most of them have had no opportunity to observe the manner in which the Wood Duck conveys her young, to whom then shall we turn unless to those who are recommended by members of the Union and who have seen the act?

With regard to the migration record, our critic assumes first that it was submitted by a "miscellaneous lot of observers", and says that he knows from personal experience that a large proportion of records from such observers must be omitted in making up reports, and then assumes that in our report apparently everything received in the way of information is used and nothing omitted. It is to laugh! Evidently he knows nothing of the process of sifting information that is carried on in this office. We have been five years in getting together what we believe is, at the present moment, one of the best corps of observers under the sun. The greater part of them are affiliated with the American Ornithologists' Union. Hundreds of sight records received from them have been published during the past five years in The Auk. We have been surprised to see how large a proportion of the matter in The Auk is composed of material furnished by them. They are not a "miscellaneous lot". They are a selected lot--a tried and tested lot-- but as yet not a tithe of the information received from them has been published.

(To be continued)

We have an article in the February number of American Forestry. It is entitled "The Falcon and the Jay".

Bird Banding Notes

Good news from California. Mr. W. Lee Chambers, business manager of the Cooper Ornithological Club, writes this month as follows: "We organized a Banding Chapter about six weeks ago, and it is gaining every day. With a strong organization like the Cooper Club behind it, our banding club will be heard from before long." Good luck to the new banding association!

A Purple Finch, banded May 8, 1922 by Mrs. W.K. Harrington, Norwalk, Conn., returned to the trap January 30, 1923.

Tree Sparrow 33029, banded Jan. 12, 1923 by Mr. Morley of Swampscott, Mass. was taken Jan. 21 by Mr. Ropes at Danvers, Mass.

Purple Finches with bands on are seen at the feeding table of Mrs. Lenora MacComiskey in Hingham. Because of observing these birds she now desires to band birds and has written for information. Will someone please catch and record these birds?

Regarding Purple Finches, Mr. Geo. H. Priest of Brockton remarks "The finches are strong and scrappy, often bite and squeal, will catch own toes in bill and hold on while being handled".

A Robin was banded Jan. 24, and a Slate-colored Junco Feb. 6, this year, by Mr. Robie I. Tufts, of Wolfville, Nova Scotia.

February 7 Miss Inez Addie Howe, at St. Johnsbury, Vt., banded a Richardson's Owl.

Juncos apparently do not all remain at the same place all winter, some go visiting- 30942 banded at Cohasset Jan. 17 by Mr. C.L. Whittle was taken by Mr. L.B. Fletcher Feb. 10 at his station in the same town, about a mile away.

Tree Sparrow, 35805, banded at Cohasset, Mass., Jan. 29, 1923 by Mr. L.B. Fletcher, repeated Feb. 2 and 4. On Feb. 4, Mr. L.B. Fletcher took this bird to the feeding station of Mr. Charles L. Whittle and placed it on Mr. Whittle's feeding shelf, where it remained a few moments before flying away. On Feb. 7, this bird returned to Mr. Fletcher's and repeated 5 times in the next 4 days. Evidently this bird that had been trapped and handled several times had not been frightened, as it returned to the trapping station a mile away, leaving a plentiful supply of food to do so.

It will be interesting to those who have feared the band might hurt the bird's leg in snowy and frosty weather to read the opinion of Mr. R.E. Horsey, of Rochester, N.Y. He writes: "Birds caught in thawing weather or when the temperature is about freezing often have a considerable amount of snow or even ice on the band----have thawed out band between thumb and finger sometimes---as ice obscured numbers----the bands were never frozen to the leg but would slide freely up and down---none have been found with leg injured, although many have repeated, and I know of no injury from this cause.

EDWARD HOWE FORBUSH

Director.

